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THE ORIENTAL RESEARCH SERIES

THE CHURCH OF ABYSSINIA

THE CHURCH OF ABYSSINIA

BY

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LONDON

LUZAC & Co.

48 GREAT RUSSEL STREET, W. C. 1

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PREFACE

ABYSSINIA, with the exception of Liberia, is the only autonomous country on the great continent of Africa. How that independence was preserved throughout two thousand years, against the Islamic and Galla invasions, the advent of the Portuguese, and the general partition of Africa during the nineteenth century, is an interesting story which yet remains to be written in an adequate and scientific manner; but even more enthralling are the fortunes and vicissitudes of the Abyssinian Church.

One of the problems that has always faced the expansion of the Christian Church has been how Christianity could be adapted to meet peculiar ethnic conditions and at the same time maintain an identity as well as a continuity with the religion of the historical Jesus. That problem is especially acute in the Far East at the present moment. In the Abyssinian Church, we have a living example of how Christianity was transplanted to African soil and assimilated by an African people.

This book however is not concerned with the history of Christianity in Abyssinia but with the institutions and life of the Abyssinian Church. With the exception of Archdeacon Dowling's pamplet [1] and an article [2]

[1] *The Abyssinian Church.* London 1909.

[2] G. K. Rein, Article "Religiose Zustande in *Abessinien.* Vol. 1 pp 374-425. Berlin 1918.

by Rein nothing even of an introductory nature exists.

The bibliography for Abyssinia [3] has reached tremendous proportions but excluding the material for the history of the Abyssinian Church and liturgical matters the sources for Abyssinian Christianity are few, scattered and often unreliable. Again, many of these sources either have been culled from Ludolf and the Portuguese authors or have repeated each other. No attempt therefore has been made in the present work to list all the diverse sources from which information has been gathered but a few books have been mentioned in the footnotes together with suggestions for finding additional material.

Acknowledgment is due to Dr. Samuel A. B. Mercer, Dr. John Maynard and Dr. George F. Black, for many valuable suggestions and for reading the proof in part.

The following firms are thanked for their courtesy in allowing the reproduction of illustrations:

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[3] G. Fumagalli *Bibliografia etiopica,* Milan 1893, pp. 288 exhaustive up to date of publication. See also L. Sarvicke, *Studya nad Abisynia* Warsaw 1913, p. 10-42 C. Regimanset in Duchesne-Fournet, *Mission en Ethiopie* Paris 1908-09 Vol. II p. 357-388. R. S. Whiteway, Bibliography of Abyssinia, in his translation of M. de Castanhoso, *the Portuguese expedition to Abyssinia in* 1541-43. London 1902, p. CIV-CXXXII. A new Bibliography of Abyssinia with shortly be published in the *Oriental Research Series* as a separate volume. For that reason no bibliography is given here.

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H. I. M. Zauditu, Empress of Ethiopia,
Daughter of Menelik the Great.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

SITUATED in the north-eastern part of Africa and extending from the fourth to the fifteenth degree of north latitude, Abyssinia lies entirely within the Torrid Zone. Broadly speaking it may be described as a triangularly shaped country which slopes up from its borders to a central plateau. This central plateau having a mean elevation of 3,000 to 6,000 feet is formed by a chain of mountains running north to south over six hundred and fifty miles—broken here and there by transverse ridges jutting eastward—and reaching several peaks of 15,000 feet in Simen. The peculiar contour of the land does not permit rivers of any importance but the Atbara and the Blue Nile (Abbai), rising in the Abyssinian highlands, form the two most important tributaries of the Nile; for through their channels flows the silt that is deposited in Egypt by the annual overflow and hence Abyssinia has been often called the "Mother of Egypt". [1]

[1] The dependence of Egypt's fertility upon the Abyssinian highlands has long been recognized. It is said that at the beginning of the 12th century Hatze Takla Haymanot wrote to the Moslem authorities at Cairo calling their attention to the fact that he had within his power the ruination of Egypt's prosperity by diverting the waters of the Nile tributaries should the Moslems commit any act of hostility towards Abyssinia. Later, Lalibala (about 1200) is thought to have attempted the diversion of the tributaries of the Nile into the Indian Ocean and Lake Zwai in retaliation for the persecution of the Egyptian Christians by the Moslems. The Treaty of 1902 between Menelik II and the British Government contained a proviso in which the Emperor agreed not to allow any construction across the Blue Nile without the consent of the British Government. Recently (1927)

Though the physical features of the country are unfavorable for rivers Abyssinia is rich in lakes. The principal lake is Tsana which is the source of the Blue Nile. Southward there is a chain of nine lakes, some of them more or less connected, ending in Lake Rudolph which is 200 miles long. Only a small part of the latter lies within Abyssinia. A peculiar characteristic of these nine lakes is that some of them are fresh and some of them are salt; crocodiles being found in some of them but not in others, though they are found in both the fresh and the salt lakes.

Abyssinia has also been called "The Switzerland of Africa" a designation which not only describes its topography but also its geographical position; for like Switzerland, Abyssinia is entirely surrounded by other countries: on the south by Kenya (British); on the east by Italian, British, and French Somaliland, on the north by Eritrea (Italian), and on the west by the British Sudan.

The area of Abyssinia is about 350,000 square miles, or a little smaller than the combined areas of England, France and Italy. Physically, the country has been divided into three zones:

The Lowlands—extending around the borders of the country, has great heat and a heavy rainfall in summer. The soil is stony, dry and sandy, but yields crops of maize, sugar-cane, cotton and coffee. Coffee, which is said to have acquired its name from the district called "Kaffa", grows wild upon the upper plateaus of the lowlands, being indigenous to the country; but it is of a poor quality. An exceptionally fine grade of coffee is cultivated

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the Blue Nile dam project came into prominence when an American corporation announced that it had been commissioned to construct a dam at Lake Tsana with American capital. The Treaty of 1902 was invoked by the British Government and the plans for the dam cancelled.

in the region of Harrar and is reputed to be the original mocha. The slope of the land and the sandy soil quickly drain the country after the summer rains and leave the river beds dry, hence vegetation is scanty, consisting mostly of acacias and mimosas. Lions, leopards and monkeys are the principal animals. The climate is extremely unhealthy and has had its effect upon the few and scattered inhabitants who are small in stature, irritable and quarrelsome.

The Middle Zone—is the plateau country from 4,000 to 8,000 feet. The flora and fauna of this zone are rich and varied. Animal life includes most of those species known to Central Africa. In contrast to the lowlands this region is very healthy. In fact, fevers and full tropical conditions are largely confined to the regions lying below 4,000 feet. The mean temperature is not much greater than that of the countries surrounding the Mediterranean, 60° to 80° F., and consequently grapes, lemons, olives and pomegranates are grown. Rich pasturage affords abundant grazing for large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. The inhabitants have increased in character and worth with the improved climate. Most of the population and practically all the villages of Abyssinia are to be found in this region.

The Cold Zone—includes the land above 8,000 feet. This region is practically uninhabited and has an alpine vegetation.

Politically, Abyssinia is divided into four provinces—which were formerly kingdoms: Tigre, Amhara, Gojam, and Shoa. Over each of these there is a governor called Ras or Negus. From the latter comes the title assumed by the Emperor, which is Negus-se-nagast, i. e. "King of Kings". The full title of the Emperor is "The Lion of the Tribe of Judah has con-

quered. (The Emperor's name), by the Grace of God King of Kings of Ethiopia". In addition to governors there are many chieftains of tribes who are under the direct supervision of the central government. Thus the government of Abyssinia, though an absolute monarchy with a cabinet formed on an European model, is still a feudal organization. The present ruler is the empress Zauditu. The capital of the country is Addis-Abebba [2] which lies about five hundred miles inland and is connected by railroad with Jibuti (in French Somaliland) on the coast. The present population of Abyssinia has been estimated at 10,000,000; that of Addis-Abebba at 70,000.

The present population of the country has been formed by: (a) The indigenous inhabitants, who are probably of a negroid origin. These natives are now found only in the western and north-western part of the country. The other Abyssinians have bestowed upon them the name of Shangala or Shanqela, which was originally the name of a tribe, but has been applied to all nations of a non-Semitic and non-Hamitic origin. These people are pagans except slaves who have become Mohammedans or Christians in imitation of their masters; (b) The Hamitic or Cushite tribes that entered Abyssinia at a remote period of which we have no record. These tribes still form the basis of the Abyssinian stock. The main branches of this Hamitic people are: The Galla, in the south; the Afar, or Danakil as they are known to the Arabs, in the east; the Agaos, in the center; the

[2] It is said that Menelik II just before his war with Italy was encamped in the Entotto Hills in the neighborhood of Addis-Abebba. Being much impressed by its delightful situation and strategic position he vowed that should he be victorious he would convert his camping place into a new capital. Victory came, and in 1896 Menelik founded his new capital, naming it Addis-Abebba i. e. "the New Flower".

Sahos, in the north-east; the Bogos, who are of an Agao origin; and the Bedawin, in the north; (c) Following the Hamitic invasion of Abyssinia came a Semitic immigration from Arabia. Most of these tribes crossed the Red Sea before A. D. but a slight infiltration has continued down even to the present day. This Semitic population intermarried with the people whom they found in possession of the land and is strongest in the northern part of the country in the region of the ancient kingdom of Aksum. What civilization Abyssinia possesses is due to this Semitic wave.

This intermingling of types caused the Arabs to bestow upon the inhabitants of the country the name of "Habesch" i. e. "mixture", and from this term the modern title Abyssinia has been derived. It is also maintained that "Abyssinia" is derived from the name of the most important tribe among the original Semitic invaders, the "Habasat", the latter being derived from "Habesch". The Abyssinians however call themselves "Ityopyawan" or "Ethiopians" and their country "Ityopya" or "Ethiopia". The full title of their country is Mangesta Etyopya" or "The Kingdom of Ethiopia".

Technically the Abyssinians are not negroes. While a small portion of the population may be said to consist of semi-negroes, such as those who are descended from the indigenous people of the country and more recently from female negro slaves; the greater part of the inhabitants possess none of the striking negroid characteristics such as thickness of skull, facial formation, and shape of the foot, particularly of the heel. Color varies from intense black to pale olive. The prevailing color in the central provinces, Gojam and Amhara, is deep brown; while the dominant color in Tigre and Lasta is pale olive. The Abyssinians do not regard themselves as

negroes [3] and take great pride in possessing the lighter tints of the skin.

Omitting minor languages and the various tribal dialects—there are said to be seventy languages, two hundred if dialects are counted—the principal languages of Abyssinia are three: Amharic—which is spoken in the south and center, and next to Arabic the greatest spoken Semitic language; Tigrina—often called the "language of the Christians", is the language in the region of the old Aksumitic Kingdom; and Tigre—spoken by the half-nomadic tribes of the north. The majority of those who speak Amharic or Tigrina are Christians. Of these languages Amharic is the most important, being the speech of the court, the army, and commerce. Eventually Amharic bids to become the language of the whole country.

Christianity is not the only religion of the country but merely that of most of the highlanders.

Next to Christianity perhaps the most interesting religion of the country is that of the Falashas. The Falashas are Jews who speak an Agao dialect and live in the mountainous parts of Tigre and in the provinces bordering Lake Tsana. Various theories have been advanced as to their origin. They believe themselves to be descended from the retinue which returned with Makeda, Queen of Sheba, from her visit to King Solomon. Some maintain that their origin is due to the commercial enterprises of Solomon in the Red Sea. Others assert that the Falashas are descended from those Jews who fled from Palestine after the destruction of the Temple by

[3] When Mr. Benito Sylvain, an educated Haitian of wealthy parentage but a negro, approached Menelik II offering him, presumably because he was thought to be a negro, the honorary presidency of a program for the amelioration of the negro, the Emperor approved of the project but added, "You know, I am not a negro at all; I am a Caucasian".

Titus in A. D. 70. It is also said that this people is descended from those Jews who fled the persecution of the Copts in Egypt because they would not conform to the Christian Church. There is also the possibility that the Falashas are the descendants of the Jews of Yeb or Elephantine, a Jewish colony on the borders of Nubia in the fifth century B. C. We know that the Solomonic line of kings was once dethroned by the Jews and that eleven Jewish kings ruled at Aksum from 914-1268, but this does not throw any light upon the problem of the origin of the Falashas. The truth of the matter is, we do not know the origin of the Falashas, and it is a debatable question whether or not they are Jews or were converted to Judaism at an early date.

The Falashas are acquainted with the Old Testament, especially with the Pentateuch and the Psalms, but they do not know anything of Hebrew, the above works being written in Ge'ez or Ethiopic. Their place of worship, a hut on the outskirts of the village, is called a "Mesquid"; and like the Jewish Temple is divided into three parts, entrance to which is strictly regulated by the Levitical Law. At the rear of the "Mesquid" there is a small inclosure containing a large stone upon which the sacrifices are offered, but with the exception of the Paschal Lamb, the other sacrifices, those of the Sabbath and of the Day of Atonement, are not in accordance with the prescribed Mosaic rules. The Sabbath service lasts for a considerable time and consists of chanting psalms and hymns, the reading of allegorical stories and a few verses from Leviticus. In Stern's time they were said to have had three high priests. The regular priests, imitating the Christian hermits, practise asceticism; and there are monks who live in monasteries. The Falashas believe that Jerusalem will be rebuilt but have no notion of a

Messiah. Isolation and persecution have made them exclusive and bigoted but they are said to be devout and to observe rigorously the Ten Commandments.

The Kemant[4] or Koomant speaking the Falasha tongue and possessing Jewish features have been assigned a Jewish origin. Their religion, however, is neither similar to that of the Falashas nor has it any Jewish characteristics. On the other hand, neither is it a form of Christianity nor of Islam. They do not seem to use buildings as places of worship, but rather, sacred groves; and into these Christians and Mussulmans are not permitted to enter. Their neighbors, having vague ideas about the religion of the Kemant, call them "worshippers of wood" or simply "wood", because they pray under trees and in groves. They are said to believe in the existence of a supreme deity, in the future life, and to use rites and ceremonies peculiar to themselves. They will not eat meat that has not been killed by themselves and they will neither drink coffee nor eat fish. They have no prejudice in using Christian names and are said to administer a kind of baptism. In recent years they have displayed some disposition to be friendly towards Christianity. The Kemant are confined to the province of Gondar.

The Galla, a native African race divided into many tribes and speaking various dialects, live not only in Abyssinia but also occupy a large part of East Africa. In their own language "Galla"[5] signifies "wanderers"

[4] According to Abyssinian tradition the King of Tigre, soon after his conversion to Christianity, invaded Simen and Amhara where he found a people whose religion interested him; and to his question asking them what they were they are said to have replied, "Kam Ant" i. e. "as thou". Hence their present name.

[5] Moslem legend states that the name "Galla" was applied to the Oromo by the Prophet himself, who, on sending a summons to Wollaboo (the

H. I. H. Ras Tafari,
Regent and Heir-apparent.

or "invaders". However, they call themselves "Omma" or "Oroma" i. e. "strong or brave men". They invaded Abyssinia from the south in the fifteenth century. They are not negroes but have long flowing hair and dark brown skin. They cultivate the soil, breed cattle, and live in conically shaped huts, thatched with grass and surrounded by a stone wall.

The original religion of the Galla presents great difficulties. Even in Beke's time they had imbibed so many Christian notions that he described them as degenerate Christians. There are priests called "Lubas" whose duty it is to perform sacrifices under the sacred tree Woda. The sacrifice is a form of augury in which the entrails of a goat are examined in order to foretell the victory or the defeat of the Galla during the ensuing year. In addition to the priests there are medicine men called "Kalija" whose duty it is to cast out spirits and demons. The evil spirits are eightly-eight in number and they are ruled by two arch spirits each of whom has the oversight of forty-three evil spirits. The name of an evil spirit is Sar. The Kalija has a number of magical duties but the most interesting of all his functions is concerned with the sacred serpent. We are told that the original religion of Abyssinia previous to its conversion to Christianity was the worship of a serpent whose name was "Arwe". We may have here in the Galla rite some vestige of the ancient religion of the aborigines of East Africa.[6] This sacred serpent is regarded as the

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alleged ancestor of the Galla) to become a proselyte to the true faith, received news of the unsuccessful mission from his messenger *gal la*, i. e., "he said no". "Let this then be the denomination of the infidels in the future," replied the Prophet.

[6] A considerable number of pre-historic monuments remain in Abyssinia. There are stone circles, tumuli, dolmens, etc.; and in the region of the

mother of the universe and is concerned with fecundity rites. The Galla believe in a future life and in a place of two conditions where there are rewards and punishments.

The Waitos, who live in the region of Lake Tsana, are said to be Mussulmans, but are not recognized as such by their co-religionists. Because they eat hippopotamus flesh, a meat held to be unclean by all Abyssinians, they are despised and classed with the Jews.

It has been said that formerly the Mohammedans were more numerous in Abyssinia than at present, having been checked by the edicts of Theodore and Yohannes IV, but in reality this apparent defeat of Islam has only been a change to more peaceful methods of propagation; and this new movement is silently and surely gaining ground. Most of the Abyssinian Moslems are traders and seem to live peacefully with the Christians whom they frequently surpass in morality and intelligence. Islam in Abyssinia is Sunnite and for the greatest part professed by the Cushite nations such as the Galla. That powerful element in Islam, the religious brotherhoods, is unknown. Nor are there theological schools connected with the mosques. Most of the missionary work is carried on by the Senusi order. The Christians call the Moslems "Kjabarte".

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nine lakes south of Addis-Abebba phallic monuments attest to the presence of an ancient fecundity religion. The latter monuments were investigated by R. P. Azais in 1922-1925.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH [1]

The story of the introduction of Christianity into Abyssinia has often been told. Meropius, a merchant from Tyre, while sailing through the Red Sea was forced to land at some point upon the coast of Abyssinia in order to reprovision his ship. Accompanying him were his two young sons, Frumentius and Edesius. The ship was attacked by the natives and the crew massacred but

[1] Little is known of pre-Christian Abyssinia. Ethiopia was a vague and indefinite geographical expression for the ancients, designating any land to the south and east of Egypt, but technically it was the name of a kingdom whose seat of power continually shifted between Napata and the Island of Meroe; a kingdom which came into existence about B. C. 750, ruled Egypt during the 25th dynasty, and was practically destroyed by the Romans in the first century A. D.; though it lingered on until about 275 A. D.

The legendary history of Abyssinia previous to the rise of the Aksumitic Kingdom is contained in the Tarik Negushti i. e. "The Majesty of Kings". This Ethiopic work assigns to this legendary period a number of mythical kings or genii. Arwe (the name of the serpent which was worshipped in pre-Christian Abyssinia) reigned 400 years and imposed on the country tributes analogous to those exacted by the Minotaur until a united effort put him to death. The chief of this coalition was Za Bizi Angaba—Za has no known value, Bizi means "race of" or "chief of", and Angaba is probably the name of a tribe. This tribe is mentioned in the inscriptions at Adua. The legend therefore probably indicates a faint echo of an Angabean dynasty. Then came Za-Guedur of Zagdur, who reigned 100 years. This name is contained in the inscriptions studied by Glaser, being the name of a king of the Habasat who conquered tribes in a land southwest of Arabia. Next came Za-Zeba Besedo, who reigned 50 years; Za-Kowasya; and finally Za-Makeda, a woman who reigned 75 years. In the latter we have the subject of the famous legend of the Queen of Sheba.

The history of Abyssinia begins with the Aksumitic Kingdom, the kingdom founded at Aksum by the Semitic invaders. This power was well es-

Frumentius and Edesius were spared and sent to King Ela-Alada, whose capital was Aksum. The demeanor and information imparted by the young men so impressed the monarch that they were soon freed from slavery and eventually obtained important positions at court, Edesius becoming cup-bearer and Frumentius the chancellor of the realm.

After the death of the king, Frumentius and Edesius became the regents for the two princes until they ascended the throne as co-heirs, then they sought and received permission to return to their own country. Edesius went to Tyre but Frumentius went to Alexandria. While in Abyssinia Frumentius had secured special favors for the Christian traders in the country and now he discussed with Athanasius, the newly elected Patri-

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tablished by the first century A. D., and a considerable number of monuments remain at Aksum, Yeha, Kaskase and Toconda, which attest to that greatness. About this time also the Aksumitic Kingdom had pushed its borders to the Nile and had occupied a portion of the old Ethiopic Kingdom but it had no organic relation with the old Ethiopia. Nor is there any evidence showing that the early Aksumitic Kingdom came into contact with Pharonic Egypt by land. During the Ptolemaic period however the Red Sea was well known and there was frequent communication by sea between the two countries.

Legend has assigned the origin of Abyssinian Christianity to St. Matthew, to St. Bartholomew (his traditional connection with India confused with Ethiopia) and even to the account of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch by St. Philip. Indich, the traditional name of the eunuch, was an officer of Candace, the Queen of Ethiopia. Candace is not the name of a queen but the royal title of several queens who ruled over the old kingdom of Ethiopia just before and after the Christian era. The eunuch and his queen therefore were not Abyssinians but Sudanese.

The original story of the introduction of Christianity into Abyssinia is contained in Rufinus (Hist. Eccl. L. I. C. 9) who asserts that he had the account from Edesius himself. The narrative is repeated with variations by Socrates (Hist. Eccl. L. I. C. 15); Theodoret (Hist. Eccl. L. I. C. 22); and Sozomenus (L. II. C. 23). This version is practically the same as that contained in the Seneksar but the latter tradition is palpably not of native origin and has little value.

arch of Alexandria, the possibility of converting Abyssinia. Athanasius was interested in the project and immediately consecrated Frumentius the first bishop of Abyssinia. This was about 340 A. D.

The title of Abuna Salama, i. e., "Father of Peace", was bestowed upon Frumentius after his death, but during his own lifetime Christianity did not become the national religion of Abyssinia. Two inscriptions discovered at Aksum give us an approximate date as to when Christianity became the official religion of the country. These two inscriptions are by Ezana or Tazana, who has been called the Constantine of Abyssinia, for in the earlier inscription he is a pagan, but in the later inscription a Christian. The approximate date of this change was about 450.

Another momentous event occurred in the Abyssinian Church about the time that Christianity became the national religion. In the year 451 came the celebrated Council of Chalcedon which placed its official approval upon the doctrine of the two natures of Christ. Confusion followed. The Eastern Church was split up into parties and the Alexandrian Patriarch, Dioscurus, rejecting the council's decision and still maintaining that Christ had but one nature, a blending of the divine and the human, was banished from his see. The Abyssinian Church, having received its Christianity from Egypt and being under the special suzerainty of the Patriarch of Alexandria, supported Dioscurus.[2]

The next occurrence of importance in Abyssinian Church history was the introduction of monasticism which like Christianity also came from Egypt. In 480,

[2] Dioscurus is still commemorated in the Abyssinian Church—twice in the Calendar; on September 4th, and on October 14th; and in the Liturgy, in "The Absolution of the Son."

Abba Aragawi, who is said to have received his habit from St. Pachomius, together with eight other monks of the Order of St. Anthony, founded the celebrated monastery at Debra Damo in Tigre. This party of monks is known as the "Nine Saints".

During the fifth and sixth centuries holy men from all parts of the Eastern Church flocked to Abyssinia and the miracles recorded of them are stupendous. In the sixth century also we have the episode of the martyrs of Nagran who are commemorated in the Abyssinian Calendar. Aretas, a distinguished man of Aksum, was appointed governor of Nagran by the emperor of Ethiopia. His jurisdiction probably included portions of Arabia Felix. Dhunuwas, a Jewish chief, besieged Nagran and put Aretas, his wife and other Christians to death. The date of this persecution is variously given between 522 and 541. This atrocity was revenged by the Emperor whose name has been variously given: Audog or Abad, or David, by Syrian authorities; Kaleb by an Ethiopian poet; and Elesbaan by Greek and Roman authors.[3] Following this conquest commercial communications were for a time established with India and Ceylon.

From the beginning of the seventh until the end of the fifteenth centuries practically nothing is known of the Abyssinian Church.[4] The two outstanding events of this "Dark Ages" period are the overthrow of the Solomonian rulers and the establishment of the Zague dynasty, and the golden age of monasticism in the thir-

[3] Under the last name, Elesbaan, he is still honored in the Roman Calendar on the 27th day of October.

[4] One would expect some information from the Arabian geographers for this period but there is none. Islam made little progress against Abyssinia until the time of Gran.

teenth century. Just as the Middle Ages drew to a close rumors began to trickle through to Europe that somewhere in the East there was a Christian king and a Christian people surrounded by barbarians. The historical basis of the legend of Prester John was Abyssinia.

The acts of the Council of Florence (1439) tell of an embassy sent from Abyssinia by the emperor Zara Yaqob. These representatives were accepted as coming from Prester John. The Ethiopian priests in a disputation maintained the doctrine of the one nature of Christ while the representatives of the Council argued for the two natures. It is related that the Ethiopians were killed on the way home as they were passing through Egypt. At this period Portugal was interested in seeking a short passage to India and as a part of that project the Portuguese Ambassador at Rome sent representatives to Abyssinia, but being unable to speak any of the languages of the country they brought back little news.

Soon after, in 1487, Pedro de Covilham and Alphonso de Pavia were sent by John II of Portugal to discover a short passage to India. Although it was thought that Prester John lived in India, when they reached Aden, upon hearing of a Christian king in Abyssinia they decided to take no chances so Pavia at once started for his court. Covilham continued his voyage to India but on his return he too, in spite of the fact that Pavia had been assassinated, set out for Ethiopia where he arrived in 1490. He was well received but when he desired to depart he found to his dismay that the law of that country did not allow a person who had once entered to leave. Though Covilham was not permitted to return to Portugal he was allowed to correspond with his king, whom

he advised to send missionaries. These would accomplish two purposes, a favored position for Portugal and the conversion of Abyssinia to the Roman faith. A mission was at once fitted out and finally reached Abyssinia. Its description of the riches and wonders, things that never existed, aroused the fancy of Europe. It was still thought that Abyssinian Christianity was exactly like that of Rome.

Queen Helena, who acted as regent for her son Lebna Dengel, sent an Armenian named Matthew as an envoy to Portugal in 1507 to solicit aid against the Mohammedans. After considerable delay a Portuguese mission under the leadership of de Lima was dispatched but on its arrival found Lebna Dengel upon the throne. One of the members of this embassy was Alvarez who has left us an account of its activities. This commission remained in Abyssinia for six years and in 1523 returned to Portugal. A subordinate member of the commission, John Bermudez, stayed in Abyssinia.

About this time the Galla were making inroads from the interior and the Mohammedans under Gran [5] were driving the Christians back into the highlands. To repell this invasion, Bermudez, who had been appointed Abuna upon the death of his predecessor, was sent to Portugal by the Emperor to seek aid. After considerable delay four hundred men under Christopher de Gama, a brother of the famous Vasco de Gama, disembarked at Massowah in 1542. In the meantime the Emperor who had summoned them had died. However, in the same year of the arrival, August 30, there was an engagement with the Mohammedan forces during which the

[5] Gran, i. e. "The left-handed" was Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, the Emir of Harrar. The invasion began about 1528, and Abyssinia was not out of danger until the victories of Sarsa Dengel between 1577 and 1589.

Abyssinians fled and the Portuguese were surrounded. Eventually the latter cut their way through but their leader, who was wounded, was captured and his head sent to Constantinople as a trophy. The surviving Portuguese now besought the new emperor Claudius [6] for an opportunity to avenge the death of their leader. In the battles that followed not only were the Galla subdued but also the Mohammedans. Gran was defeated and killed in 1544.[7]

The successes of the Portuguese gave Bermudez and the Jesuits a favorable position but the advantage was used unwisely. The conversion of the natives to the Roman faith and a demand for one third of the kingdom were naturally rejected. Bermudez threatened excommunication and the emperor Claudius retorted that the Pope himself was a heretic. Open hostilities broke out and, the Portuguese forces having been separated, Bermudez was exiled to the mountains of Efat.

The conversion of Abyssinia was not abandoned by the failure of Bermudez. An Abyssinian priest on arriving in Rome asserted that the failure to convert Abyssinia had been due only to Bermudez and that men of sense and capacity would be heard. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, volunteered to go in person; but eventually thirteen other members of the

[6] Or Galawdewos, who wrote the famous confession of faith.

[7] Preposterous legends immediately sprang up around Gran's name and some of them are still believed in Abyssinia. It was asserted that he was of gigantic proportions, rode a steed of colossal size, and carried a lance over twenty feet in length. Though it is a matter of historical evidence that Gran was killed by a single shot discharged from the gun of a Portuguese soldier named Peter Lyon fancy maintained that Gran fell only after four thousand bullets had entered his body. The superstitions gathered around the supernatural achievements of Gran added much to the fear of the Adaiel which continued to modern times.

order were chosen at the head of whom were Nunez Baretto, elevated to the rank of patriarch, and Andre Oviedo, Bishop of Hieropolis.

This mission landed at Massowah in 1558. The two leaders however went on to Goa and in their places sent a priest named Gonsalvez Rodriques, but he also failed to convince the Emperor and returned to Massowah. Oviedo now went in person. He was well received by

Old Portuguese bridge on the Upper Blue Nile, built in the time of Paez.

Claudius but to the bishop's demands he replied that he was well disposed towards the Portuguese, he would grant them lands and permission for settlements, and that the Portuguese could exercise in private the rites of their own religion; but as the Abyssinian Church had been under the Copts for centuries, he would have to

canvass opinions by holding an assembly. The assembly was held and in it the Emperor personally disputed with the bishop, and though Oviedo later maintained that he had defeated his opponent in argument, the practical outcome was a decision of those assembled that neither their king nor the people owed allegiance to Rome. In retaliation Oviedo placed his spiritual ban over the kingdom—this on February 5, 1559.

At this point the Adaiel invaded the land and Claudius perished in battle.[8] He was succeeded by his brother Admas who was determined to avenge the death of his brother which he attributed to the Portuguese. He therefore cancelled the land grants which had been given to them as rewards for their service and threatened the bishop and his companions with death.

The Jesuits now settled at Maiguagua where they were not molested by the new emperor, Malak Sagad. Oviedo then conceived an elaborate plan of converting not only Abyssinia but also the surrounding countries. But at this point he was recalled and sent to Japan. This was in 1560.

Thirty years of effort had been expended by the Portuguese without results and the task of converting Abyssinia was almost dropped but Philip II of Spain stirred up new zeal. The next missionaries to undertake the

[8] Defeated and killed in March 1559 by Nur al-Din, Gran's successor. Regardless of a warning issued by the Superior of Debra Libanos that the archangel Gabriel had appeared to him in a vision and had predicted defeat for the Abyssinian forces, Claudius again entered battle. In the fight that followed the Abyssinians fled and Claudius and a few Portuguese retainers who stood their ground were killed. Nur cut off the Emperor's head and placed it at the feet of Del Wumbarea who had promised to marry him upon that condition and the body was suspended to a tree before her door. There it remained for three years until purchased by an Armenian merchant who had it interred in the holy sepulchre of St. Claudius at Antioch, Syria.

work were Pero Paez and Montzerado, who disguised as Armenian merchants and wrecked upon the Arabian coast, were at once recognized as Christian priests and cast into a dungeon where they remained for seven years.

Abraham de Georgis, a priest from Goa, now made an attempt to reach Abyssinia, but his disguise was penetrated when he reached the island of Massowah, and upon the governor demanding that since he had pretended to be a Mohammedan he must become one in truth, and upon his refusal, was put to death. About the same time Jean Baptiste another missionary was detected in a Turkish disguise and suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Turks of Comera.

Melchior Sylva, a converted Brahmin, was then selected by Don Alexis de Menedez, the Archbishop of Goa, as a suitable person to reach Abyssinia. It was thought that his color would help him run the Turkish gauntlet. Upon the news of his safe arrival Pero Paez was ransomed from the Arabs and was sent to Abyssinia with a party of priests. He arrived in 1603.

Paez was a man of prudence and ability and, adopting a new policy, he and his followers quietly settled at Maiguagua where they opened a school. News of this work soon reached the ears of Za Dengel, the temporary occupant of the throne, and with roused curiosity he summoned Paez to court. Influence was soon acquired over the Emperor and the use of the Roman rite was not only sanctioned but also the conversion of the monarch was accomplished. Rebellion broke out at once and the Emperor was slain.

Susneyos now came to the throne. Paez' ability as an architect at once brought him into the good graces of the new ruler. A stone bridge built over the Blue Nile

at this period still remains. The first convert was Ras Sela Chrestos, the brother of the monarch, and many nobles and chiefs followed his example. The holiness of the new converts, the knowledge acquired from their foreign teachers, and the new arts made a great impression. A royal edict was published interdicting all persons from holding office who were not well inclined towards the Latin religion and severe punishments were enacted against the promulgation of the ancient doctrine. The Abuna Abba Semon remonstrated but in a conference he and his clergy were defeated. A second edict, the death penalty for those who did not believe in the two natures of Christ, followed. The Abuna retaliated by placarding the doors of the churches threatening excommunication to those who embraced the new faith. Another royal edict was issued compelling all subjects to become Roman Catholics.

A general rebellion soon arose and Ailius, the Emperor's son-in-law, placed himself at the head of the dissatisfied faction in Tigre. The Emperor made immediate preparations to put down the revolt but in order to gain time temporized by calling another religious conference which lasted six days. This meeting came to nothing. The Empress, the court, and the clergy begged the Emperor to desist in his efforts but civil war began. In Tigre Ailius issued a proclamation allowing those who desired to embrace the new faith to leave the province. In his defense of the ancient faith he was joined by Abuna Semon who was one hundred years old. Ailius and his party were defeated and he and the Abuna were killed. The Emperor then issued an edict forbidding the observance of the Sabbath. As a result, the inhabitants of Begemeder, led by Joanel, flew to arms and were joined by the Galla. Scarcely had the Emperor reached

his capital there came news of another rebellion in the province of Damot on the borders of the Nile. After a long and bloody battle, in which the royal forces were led by Ras Sela Chrestos, the latter uprising was crushed. The Emperor, who heretofore had been in fear of his subjects and in addition had not desired to discard his harem, now professed the new faith. He made this known by a proclamation to his subjects and letters to the same effect were sent to Rome and Lisbon.

Paez at once wrote to Rome requesting a patriarch and twenty ecclesiastics. Nutio Vitelesi, the general of the Jesuit Order, offered to go ; but Alphonso Mendez was chosen in his stead. This mission reached the coast of Abyssinia in 1624 and with it came masons and musicians. Paez had died the year before.

Though Susneyos submitted to Rome on February 11, 1626 the new creed was not popular with the people. When representations of scriptural scenes were put on the stage at the Paschal feast, and demons introduced, the people rushed away exclaiming that the foreigners had brought their devils with them. Civil war was soon renewed. Takla Giyorgis, a son-in-law of the Emperor, raised the standard of revolt but Rebaxus the governor of Tigre put down the rebellion. Once again the mountaineers of Begemeder arose in defense of their ancient faith and Meleaxus with a host of armed peasants from Lasta drove the governor from the province. Susneyos began to waver. A few concessions were made but before anything could be done the new rebellion had to be suppressed. Marching against Lasta the rebels were crushed with great slaughter but the monarch realizing that his subjects would not tolerate the new faith restored the old religion by an edict in 1632. Susneyos died a few years later still professing the Catholic faith.

Fasiladas succeeded to the throne and immediately banished the missionaries. The exiled mission sought protection with the Prince of Bar who had been an enemy of the Abyssinian Emperor but he turned its members over to the Turks. Some of them reached Europe after many adventures. Among these was Father Jerome Lobo who wrote a history of the mission.

Soon after a band of Capuchins attempted to reach Abyssinia but seven of them were killed, three by the Pasha of Suakim at the request of the Abyssinian Emperor. It was not until 1702 that another attempt was made to convert Abyssinia when three Franciscans reached as far as Gondar. Several princes were converted and the Emperor wrote to Clement XI proclaiming his submission but a palace revolution put an end to everything.

The Holy See divided Abyssinia into two apostolic vicariates in 1846—that of Abyssinia, entrusted to the Lazarists with M. de Jacobus at its head; and that of the Galla, given to the Capuchins, with Father (afterwards Cardinal) Guglielmo Massaia in charge. Much persecution was suffered under Theodore and Yohannes IV but peace was restored with the accession of Menelik II in March, 1889.

In 1904, the Vicariate of Abyssinia, comprising the provinces of Tigre, Amhara and Gondar, was said to have 4,000 Catholics, two churches, two chapels, six Lazarist priests, and four native secular priests with more than sixty seminarians studying Ge 'ez at Alitiena. The Vicariate of the Galla, comprising the province of Shoa, was said in 1904 to contain 18,000 Catholics and twenty churches.

Protestant missionary work began in 1830 under Samuel Gobat, later a bishop, and Christian Kugler

who were sent out by the Church Missionary Society. Kugler died soon after his arrival and his place was subsequently taken by Isenberg. Gobat was forced to leave the country in 1838 when the Protestant missionaries were expelled but still kept in touch with Abyssinia through the pilgrims at Jerusalem. In this work he was assisted by Mr. Spittler a philanthropist at Basle. As the result of this co-operation six young men who were pupils of the St. Chrischona Institute at Basle were sent to Jerusalem for preliminary instruction before departing for Abyssinia.

In 1854 Krapf and Flad left Jerusalem for Cairo and here they were joined by a young Abyssinian named Maderakal who had received an European education. The mission soon reached Massowah and proceeding to Debra Tabor had a satisfactory interview with Theodore and the Abuna, the former largely interested by the opportunity offered to secure European artisans. The mission then returned to Europe to make the necessary arrangements for its work. Maderakal opened a school at Adua and began to teach out of the Amharic Bible but was soon called by Theodore to act as his interpreter. The Emperor expected to profit by Maderakal's eleven years in Europe, thinking that he had become acquainted with the arts and sciences, but such was not the case, for the mechanical knowledge which would have been of great usefulness to his country had not been imparted.

Flad returned to Abyssinia in 1855 and was accompanied by his wife, Bender, Kiensle, Mayer, and several German gunsmiths who soon succumbed to the climate. Later in the year they were joined by Waldmaier and Saalsmüller also of the Chrischona Institute, and afterwards by Bourgaud, a French gunsmith, Zander, a

German resident of the country, and Moritz, a Polish soldier of fortune. Flad then became connected with the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews and removed to Gondar. The rest of the party at Theodore's request settled at Gaffat a few miles from Debra Tabor where the Emperor usually resided.

Stern went to Abyssinia in 1860 and others followed, but the imprisonment of several British subjects including Stern, by Theodore, led to the British military expedition of 1868 under Lord Napier. The missionaries were again expelled by Yohannes in 1886, and Menelik scarcely tolerated them.

Modern missionary work[9] in Abyssinia has been until recently largely in the hands of the Swedish National Society. The Swedish mission at Addis-Abebba was started by Cederquist. American missionary enterprise maintains a hospital at Addis-Abebba and work among the Galla.

[9] At present a splendid educational work is conducted among the Falashas by Dr. Jacques Faitlovitch. Recently a movement has been started by Dr. Cyrus Adler, President of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and Dropsie College of Philadelphia, and other prominent American Jewish leaders, to support the work of Dr. Faitlovitch and in addition to build a college for teachers at Addis Abebba and a school in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER III

CHURCH CONSTITUTION

The Christian Church in Abyssinia is not autonomous but a quasi-province of the Coptic Church of Egypt, a relationship which has existed from the days of Frumentius with the exception of the period during the Portuguese influence, about 1500 to 1633.

The Abuna

The chief ecclesiastic is the Abuna or Abuna Salama i. e. "Father of Peace", who is appointed and consecrated by the Coptic Patriarch[1] in Cairo, Egypt. The Abuna is never a native Abyssinian but always a Copt and a member of the Order of St. Anthony who is chosen from one of the Coptic monasteries. This subordination to the Coptic Church, which is said to have begun originally as an act of gratitude because Abyssinia had received its Christianity from Egypt, was later made obligatory by the 42nd canon of the pseudo-Arabic Canons of the Council of Nicea. The custom was further secured in the thirteenth century by Takla Haymanot, who thought the procedure desirable and gave it his sanction, since it would keep the Abyssinian Church, cut off from the rest of Christendom by the invasion of Islam, somewhat in touch with the outer

[1] The decree of the Council of Chalcedon (451) affirming the doctrine of the two natures of Christ created a great schism in the Egyptian Church which resulted in two parties—the monophysite party championed by the Copts who were native Egyptians and the modern descendants of the an-

world. In an Ecumenical Council the Abuna may occupy the eighth seat, following the See of Seleucia.

Though the Abyssinian Church still receives its primate from the Coptic Church of Egypt, there has in recent years been some revolt against the practice ; and with the growing feeling of nationalism, a corresponding desire to have an independent national church has arisen. The emperor Johannes IV once petitioned the Armenian Patriarch residing at Constantinople to send Armenian Bishops to Abyssinia, but at that time public opinion in his country was against the proposal. Within recent years, before the Great War, it is said that an unsuccessful attempt was made by the Russians to have the Abyssinian Church placed under the protection of the Russian Church instead of the Coptic Church.

On the death of an Abuna an embassy is at once despatched to Cairo with the request that the Coptic Patriarch appoint and consecrate another Abuna. This embassy carries a sum of money which is presented to the Coptic Patriarch. As soon as the Abuna is consecrated he sets out for Abyssinia with his father confessor, the

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cient Egyptians; and the orthodox party composed of non-Coptic Egyptians, largely of Greek extraction. The latter are known as the Melkites. This twofold cleavage was in the beginning and has continued along racial rather than theological lines. The division naturally produced two patriarchs. The succession of the Coptic patriarchate has been unbroken down to the present time but the Melkite patriarchate supported as it was by orthodox Christianity and the Roman Empire practically ceased with the Moslem invasion of Egypt though a remnant of these orthodox Egyptian Christians with a patriarch at Alexandria has survived to the present day. The Abuna is consecrated by the Coptic patriarch who is styled, "The most holy pope and patriarch of the great city of Alexandria and all the land of Egypt, of Jerusalem the holy city, of Nubia, Abyssinia and Pentapolis (Christianity in Nubia and Pentapolis no longer exists), and all the preaching of St. Mark". Though called in this title "patriarch of the great city of Alexandria" the Coptic patriarchate was removed to Babylon (Old Cairo) sometime after the Moslem conquest of Egypt and in modern times was shifted to Cairo proper.

His Beatitude Matewos, the Abuna.

Abuna Qasis, and there he remains for the rest of his life. This ancient precedent has been broken by the present Abuna Matewos, who has left the country twice—always with the consent of the Emperor—once on a mission to the Russian Church where he was favorably received, and again to Egypt in order to recover from a serious illness. When the Abuna arrives in Abyssinia certain lands and revenues are set aside for his maintenance. He always resides in the place where the Emperor holds his court, at present in Addis-Abebba.

The Abuna is the Metropolitan of the Abyssinian Church and though appointed and consecrated by the Coptic Patriarch is not otherwise under his immediate jurisdiction. He has the power to ordain priests and deacons but is not permitted to appoint or to consecrate his bishops. In all questions of dogma, morals and discipline, he is the last court of appeal; and the dispensation of vows and the superintendence of theological education are his prerogatives. Each church must contain a Tabot. This the Abuna blesses, and his blessing of the Tabot may be considered the equivalent of consecrating a church. The Abuna does not visit the churches for this purpose but the Tabots are brought to him. It is also his special privilege to anoint and to crown the Emperor upon his accession to the throne. Being a monk the Abuna is not allowed to marry.

Upon ordinary occasions the Abuna wears a black silk mantle, a turban with a silk ribbon of the same color, and a red zucchetta. The last is merely the monk's cap, but red instead of the usual black. His collar is marked with a cross. Upon solemn occasions the vestments of the Abuna are more elaborate. He wears a mitre, carries a pastoral staff in his left hand, and has

the special privilege of using an umbrella of cloth of gold, a prerogative conceded only to the Emperor.

Although the Abuna is the chief ecclesiastic in the kingdom and the final court of appeal in doctrinal matters, he is closely hedged in by canon law and custom, and would not dare promulgate some truth which would oppose any strong national prejudice. The Abuna's political authority is said to be extensive and his advice constantly sought in the councils of state. This may well be considering the case of Likj Yeasus who succeeded his grandfather Menelik II. Influenced by German and Turkish advisers the new prince not only declared himself a Mussulman but also decreed Islam to be the national religion of the realm. The Abuna Matewos immediately deposed the Emperor for his apostasy and in the following hostilities the Christian party won. Zauditu, a daughter of Menelik, was proclaimed Empress.

The Echage

The second person in ecclesiastical importance is the Echage who is the grand prior of the monks of Debra Libanos. Thus he is the successor of Takla Haymanot. Originally the Echage was an official who visited monasteries in order to correct abuses but gradually his place of residence became fixed and his particular duties were transformed until he became the civil government's check upon the Abuna and the Coptic Church. Since the seventeenth century the Echage has lived at Gondar. He is always a native of Abyssinia and is always appointed by civil authority.

The prerogatives of the Echage are principally concerned with the administration of his order. He appoints the Liqa Kahenat, his coadjutors, who have se-

verally the charge of the monasteries of the order in the various provinces of the country. In addition to this general supervision of the monasteries under his care he also has charge of the existing literature of the Church and of theological education, the latter under the guidance of the Abuna. Other authority does not extend beyond the simple admission of monks into the order and the granting of absolution for minor offences. However, his position as a government official and as the head of a powerful order of monks gives the Echage tremendous influence. He is always a monk and consequently can not marry.

The Nebrat

The third person in ecclesiastical importance is the Nebrat who is the governor of the geddem at Aksum. Perhaps he is best described as the Alaka-in-chief.

The Grand Almoner and The Keeper of the Watch

There are two other Church dignitaries who possess considerable power and influence, the one, the Qes Atse or the Grand Almoner; the other, the Aqobe Saat or the Keeper of the Watch (Time). Both of these officials are attached to the court and have the duties indicated by their titles.

The Bishops

The most common word for bishop is "papas". Some-

times "episkopos" (Greek) and "eskuf" (Arabic) are used. The number of bishops in the Abyssinian Church was limited to seven by one of the pseudo-Arabic Canons of the Council of Nicea—the purpose of the canon being the subordination of the Abyssinian Church to the Coptic Church. Since twelve bishops are required to consecrate a Patriarch the Abuna does not possess patriarchal prerogatives nor can he be consecrated in Abyssinia. Originally the Abuna had power to consecrate his own bishops but this privilege was withdrawn centuries ago. Abyssinian bishops today, whenever they exist, are chosen from the Coptic monasteries of Egypt and are appointed and consecrated by the Coptic Patriarch. In accordance with the general movement in the East to suppress minor sees even these seven bishoprics have been reduced to two, not including the Abuna. These bishops are bishops in name only and are of little importance. Technically it may be said that bishops no longer exist in the Abyssinian Church[2]. Each church in the bishop's diocese is bound to pay him annually a stated fee, about five dollars. Unlike the Abuna, the bishop may return to Egypt should he so choose.

The functions of the bishop are not particularly onerous. When the Tabot has accidentally been touched by a deacon or a layman it is the bishop's duty to purify and to bless it. It is also his duty to say the prayer of admission when candidates seek monastic seclusion and to make the sign of the cross upon the skull cap which each monk must wear. The bishop's authority over the

[2] It would be interesting to speculate as to just what will happen when the present Abuna dies. Considering the strained relations between the Abyssinian and Coptic Churches, the several attempts to secure bishops elsewhere, and the strong national spirit in Abyssinia it is not unreasonable to suppose that an independent patriarchate will be demanded and that the ancient office of bishop will be restored.

inferior members of the Church does not seem to be very great and in fact the "Fetha Nagast" declares the priests' independence of them.

The Priests

Requirements of education and age for admission to the priesthood are not severe. The standard of education demanded extends little beyond the ability to read and say the Nicene Creed and a technical knowledge of the services. A requirement of age has not been set as a prerequisite for admission to the priesthood but a boy must have reached the age when his beard begins to grow.

The duties of the priest, or *kasasa,* are to baptize, to conduct the daily services of the Church, to solemnize marriage when required, to hear confessions, to perform the rite of unction, and to hold funeral services. A daily Communion Service is held and the priest is required to receive. A priest must devote all his time to the service of the Church and not engage in any gainful occupation. His services must be given at all times and to everyone irrespective of rank or wealth. In confession he must not be a rigorist but be willing to accept the truly penitent at any time.

The privileges and prerogatives of the priests are considerable. They are treated with great respect by the people who bow upon meeting or passing them in the church, and the priest nods in return. He is addressed as "papa" or "father" and in speaking to him the second person plural is used even by chiefs and persons of the highest rank. A priest may be married provided he was married before being made deacon, but a wife may

not be put away after his ordination. The priest who lays claim to a higher spiritual state because he is unmarried is disciplined and advised to seek monastic vows. The misdemeanors and crimes of the priests are not tried by civil courts but come before an ecclesiastical judge. The privilege of "benefit of clergy" does not seem to be abused and crimes such as murder are punished by immediate deposition, which then allows the civil courts to take action.

The dress of the priest differs little from that of the laity. The distinctive feature of Abyssinian clothing is the "shamma", which is something like the old Roman toga, draped around the shoulders and either drawn up over the chin or down over the head leaving only the eyes exposed. The shamma is lowered from the face as a mark of friendliness, or of respect. The ordinary shamma is usually edged with a narrow red stripe, which according to tradition represents the blood which flowed from the body of Christ. Priests and persons of great rank have a border, varying in width from twelve to eighteen inches, which is often elaborately ornamented. The wealth and rank of a wearer are usually judged by the quality of the material and the border of his shamma.

Under the shamma a pair of roomy trousers is worn, tied at the waist and having the legs gathered in tightly from the calf to the ankle somewhat like riding breeches. A loose shirt, reaching below the knees, is worn over the trousers. Men and women wear the same costume except the latter have theirs more ornamented. In addition to this ordinary costume the priest wears a large flat white turban. The other articles peculiar to the clergy are used only upon religious occasions.

The Abbot of the Abyssinian monastery in Jerusalem.

The Deacons

Purity of life is considered essential in deacons and consequently they are usually children, who after they have attained the age of twelve or thirteen are no longer considered fit to approach the sacred Tabot. During the divine service, the deacon acts as acolyte and his presence helps to complete the requisite number necessary for the celebration of the Holy Communion. Seven are required for a Communion Service. In addition to these functions the deacon has the peculiar duty of baking the Eucharistic bread in the oven of the Bethlehem, and making fresh wine before each Communion Service. He also acts as a prompter during the services, directing the actions and responses of the congregation. Though a deacon may approach the sacred ark he is not allowed to touch it, and should this accidentally happen it must be re-blessed and purified by the bishop. A deacon is not allowed to baptize or to say the benediction, and is only permitted to marry before ordination. The word used for deacon is "deakon".

Minor Orders

There are a number of quasi-orders in the Church. These include subdeacons, deaconesses who assist in the baptism of adult females, anagnosts or masters of ceremony, and singers. Next might be placed the learners or aspirants, theological students who aspire to orders. They are known as "tamarie" who during the time they are studying, reading, and psalm-singing, wear the skins of sheep for clothing, and beg their daily bread.

Ordination

The classical description of ordination has been given by Bruce and has been often quoted,[3] but the real situation has been best summed up by Le Grand: [4]

"The Abyssinians no less than the Copts and Greeks, give nearly the same definition of ordination as we do; agreeing that it is a sacred sign, accompanied with many solemn ceremonies, with which the bishop (Abuna), by the imposition of hands, confers on the persons ordained a portion of grace convenient for the ecclesiastical office

[3] "A number of men and children present themselves at a distance and there stand from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who they are and they tell him they want to be deacons. On this with a small cross on his hands after making two or three signs, he blows with his mouth twice or thrice upon them saying, 'Let them be deacons'. I saw once all the army of Begemder made deacons, just returning from shedding the blood of 10,000 men, thus drawn up in Aylo Meidan, and the Abuna standing at the Church of St. Raphael, about a quarter of a mile distant from them. With these mingled about 1000 women, who consequently, having part of the same blast and brandishment of the Cross, were as good deacons as the rest."

Parkyns repeats a similar tale: "The ordination of priests and deacons is I believe, tolerable simple; for instance, I have been told, on the arrival of the present Abuna from Egypt, the candidates, who are only required to be able to read a little, were collected in a mass near the place where he was. The bishop (i. e. the Abuna) then went through some ceremony, and ended by pronouncing a blessing, and blowing in the direction of the assembled crowd, who were thus all ordained (!). Among these was a woman with her child in her arms, who had come thither from motives of curiosity. She, too, was of course ordained; but I don't remember hearing that she ever officiated." *Life in Abyssinia,* by Mansfield Parkyns. Vol II, p. 82.

Needless to say these two accounts of ordination are useless. The Church law of Abyssinia forbids the ordination of either those engaged in non-ecclesiastical occupations such as the warriors or women. Undoubtedly upon the occasions described above only a small number of candidates were ordained and the doctrine of intention prevented the crowd from being ordained at the same time.

[4] See Le Grand's *Dissertations on the Abyssinian Sacraments* (1728). These were translated by Dr. Johnson and are to be found at the end of his translation of Lobo's, *History of Abyssinia,* 1735.

to which they are raised. They believe with us that the episcopacy, the priesthood, and the deaconship, were instituted by Jesus Christ, and delivered down to us by the Apostles and their successors; that a man not ordained according to that institution cannot consecrate the Eucharist or perform any office of a priest." Again, "Whatever the missionaries, and after them, Father Balthaser Tellez, may say, there is no denying the validity [5] of the Orders conferred by the Abuna according to the practice of the Eastern Church."

The Dabtera

Within the Abyssinian Church there is an intermediate class of personages between the clergy and laymen, the dabtera or scribes. Though the dabtera are not ordained and are not under the ecclesiastical supervision of anyone, no service can properly be held without their presence. It is their chief duty to chant the psalms and hymns. Most of the learning in the Church is said to be confined to them. On the other hand some of the dabtera have acquired shady reputations as having commerce with the devil and as being the writers of charms.

[5] The validity of Abyssinian Orders was a much discussed question for over a hundred years after the beginning of the Portuguese mission. As early as 1594, Takla Maria, a converted Abyssinian monk, was examined as to his previous ordination. While the form of ordination seemed valid it was discovered that the instruments were not delivered. Nor are they delivered today. The famous case of 1704 was referred to the Holy Office for a decision. In this year the Abuna had ordained an immense multitude of ordinands to the priesthood by a hurried imposition of hands and by the pronouncement of the words, "Receive the Holy Spirit". The answer to the inquiry was, "The ordination of a priest with the imposition of hands and the pronouncing (prolatio) of the form, as in the dubium, is valid".

This decision was neither the acceptance nor the rejection of the validity of Abyssinian Orders but merely a practical rule of procedure. In 1730 Joseph Simon Assemani, a converted Marionite who had received a West-

The Alaka and Cities of Refuge

Geddem, or cities of refuge, are inviolate; and those who flee to them cannot be taken by civil authority. Taking asylum is done in the following manner: The fugitive approaches the porch of the sacred inclosure and rings the bell hung there for that purpose at the same time declaring his intention of taking refuge. This done he may live at the sanctuary until the danger is past. Food is supplied to him by his friends.

The most famous of these cities of refuge is Aksum. Not the city, but only the inner inclosure is the sanctuary, though in practice the privilege of refuge practically extends over the city. One peculiar feature of this sanctuary is that its privileges are not open to women, since they are not allowed to enter the inner inclosure, though they have access to the outer inclosure. Another feature of this sanctuary is that it serves as a safety vault. Here in times of trouble people bring their valuables which are placed in the church treasury.

Over each Geddem there is an official called the Alaka, who is appointed by civil authority and looks after the church revenue and acts as a judge. As such, they must be able to read and to write and to be conversant with the laws of the country. The Alaka need not be ordained. They are generally men of wealth and their po-

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ern education, was selected by the Congregation of the Propaganda to re-examine the whole question. The result of this investigation is contained in Assemani's "Controversia Coptica" (the two churches were investigated at the same time), a voluminous and tedious treatise. Assemani gave a full form used in Abyssinian ordinations and pointed out the errors of Ludolf and Mgr. Bel. This form contained the crucial words which had previously been omitted, "Qui ad Presbyteratum admissus est; Reple eum Spiritu Sancto—et regat populum tuum in puro corde—et opera sacerdotis super populum tuum perficiat." With sound theological arguments Assemani declared that Abyssinian Orders were valid.

A view of Aksum showing Zion Church and the geddem.

sitions are enviable ones in the country. Each church also has an official who is called an Alaka, a secular clerk, who looks after the property and revenue.

The ecclesiastical judge is also called Komas, a name probably derived from Coptic. The name *alaka* should be compared to the Hebrew term *halakah*, which connotes the legal developments of Mishna and Gemara. In this way the Abyssinian *alaka* is the Hebrew *dayyan*.

In the celebrated sanctuary of Chiscien, in Ambasal (in Uallo), the judge has the special title of "Gentere" or "Zenteral". His "negarit", i. e. "insignia" may enter within the imperial inclosure. The Gentere dresses like the Negus but is not allowed to wear a crown. This sanctuary is noted for the fact that sterile women who wish to have children live there for prescribed periods.

The Komofat

In the larger churches there is an official, the *komofat*, whose duty it is to settle disputes among the clergy.

The Laity

The laity are under strict rules and the practice of auricular confession and excommunication enforce them. Children are required to receive once a year until they are thirteen years old. Those who violate the marriage laws of the Church are automatically excommunicated. Chapter XI of the "Fetha Nagast" contains the admonitions and precepts for the laity. It is the duty of parents to see that their children are instructed in Christian teaching and taught such learning as will be useful for them in order that they do not become lazy or intractable. In the past this advice had largely been a counsel

of perfection though Menelik II attempted to put it into practice.

Church Revenue

Though certain free-will offerings are made by the people, for special days such as on the Festival of Epiphany, marriage feasts, and tescars, and fees upon certain occasions, such as for requiem services, the chief revenue of the Church is derived from its lands. [6] These lands have been given to the Church by the sovereigns and by pious laymen, the latter, when founding a church usually give a nearby plot of ground for its maintenance. Sometimes whole villages are bestowed upon a church as a part of its endowment. Dajazmach Khaylu, when he built a church, not only gave it some lands which the king had granted to him but also gave the villages of Dembach and Dajazmach. Though the priest receives no pay, the profits from the lands attached to each parish church are divided among the clergy in proportion to their several dignities. The usual division of the produce of the land is one fifth to the owner and four fifths to the cultivator.

[6] It is said, though doubted, that in the thirteenth century, after Takla Haymanot successfully restored the government to the ancient royal line after three hundred years of abeyance, he demanded as his reward a perpetual grant to the Church of one third of the land in the kingdom. This portion if it ever existed, is now much reduced but considerable land is still held. Thus the Abyssinian Church may be said to be an established Church.

CHAPTER IV

MONASTICISM

Monasticism like Christianity was introduced into Abyssinia from Egypt. In A. D. 480, the traditional date, Abba Aragawi, who is said to have received his habit from St. Pachomius, founded the celebrated monastery at Debra Damo, in Tigre. With him came eight other monks of the Order of St. Anthony and together they are known in Abyssinian Church history as the "Nine Saints". The names of these monks are variously given: Aragawi (Mikael), Pantaleon, Garima, Alef, Saham, Afe, Likanos, Adimata and Oz (Guba). Within recent years it has been maintained that these saints came from Syria, their names resembling the names of some of the famous monasteries in that country. On the other hand it is asserted that with the exception of Pantaleon, who has a Greek name, the others possess Ethiopic names.

Following the "Nine Saints" a host of holy men from all parts of the East flocked into Abyssinia and in the succeeding ages mighty and stupendous miracles were worked. Most of this early monastic movement however, was of an individualistic character, and monasticism as an institution did not reach its height and vigor until the thirteenth century under Takla Haymanot and Ewostatewos. There is no doubt that the introduction of monasticism had much influence upon the development of literature in Abyssinia and that it was due to

the monks that the Ethiopic literature which we possess was preserved.

Monasteries

Monasteries are numerous in Abyssinia and the monks form a very influential class. As a rule monasteries are perched upon some almost inaccessible summit, hence their name "debra" i. e. "mountain". These institutions serve much the same purpose as in other parts of Christendom—some of them are contemplative and others are charitable foundations for the poor and infirm for whom small huts are provided.

The principal monastery in the country is Debra Libanos situated in the center of the province of Shoa. Originally there was another monastery of the same name and of great renown in Tigre, which is said to have been founded by a holy man named Libanos or Mata, who came from Constantinople in the sixth century during the reign of King Gabra Masqal. About the middle of the fifteenth century this establishment fell into decay and King Zara Yaqob transferred its foundation as well as its name to the present Debra Libanos which was originally called Debra Asbo. The latter was founded by King Hezekeyas about fifty-seven years after the death of Takla Haymanot.

Peculiarly situated is the monastery dedicated to St. Stephen on the island of Debra Naquaquad in Lake Hayq, in the province of Amhara. This establishment is situated about 400 feet from the shore and is reached by boats belonging to the order which are kept on the island at night as a measure of precaution. In 1531 its church was destroyed by Gran. It is here, so states tradition, that Takla Haymanot received the monastic habit at the hands of Abba Iyasus Moa. The jug in

A monk.

Note the praying-crutch and the cross in his left hand.
The cap, recalling the shape of a fez, is characteristic of the monks.

which the former used to brew his beer (tedj) is still shown. According to ancient law no female, not even a hen, is allowed upon the island.

Other notable monasteries are those of Lalibala, a sacred precinct which contains the famous rock churches and the tomb of King Lalibala; Navrait, which has a tradition that its head should always be a man from Tigre; Debra Bizen, near Adua; Debra Tabor, in Begemeder; Debra Zeit, i. e. "Mount of Olives", in Uallo; and Addis Alem, near Addis-Abebba. Waldebba, a district of Tigre, contains a number of monasteries into which monks withdraw for a life of prayer and penitence. Nor is this retirement confined to monks. Even the great, as in the case of Takla Giyorgis, have taken refuge there when they fell from power or desired to retire into private life. The great prestige of these monasteries and the reputation of the monks for working miracles have been often a powerful influence in political disturbances.

Monks

The two principal orders of monks are that of Debra Libanos, the founder being Takla Haymanot—and the grand prior the Echage ; and that of Abba Ewostatewos (St. Eustathius). Though the monks claim to follow the rule of St. Anthony a number of rules are practised. At the head of each monastery there is an abbot or "memer".

Generally one road leads up to a monastery and upon this, about one half mile from the building, two crosses are erected to signify that females whether of man or beast cannot proceed farther. Each institution contains a church similar to a parish church in all respects except females are not allowed to enter it. The monks live

in little stone cells clustered around a rock on which stands a cross. Around these small huts are garden patches where each monk grows the vegetables and herbs which form his diet. There is a common dining room, provided with a kitchen, where all the monks eat. The monastic establishment also includes barns where the produce from the lands owned by the monastery is

The hut of a hermit in the Forest.

stored. Occasionally a monastery will contain several hundred members but a much smaller number is usual.

Admission to a monastery is said to be a simple ritual. The officiating priest, usually the Superior of the Order or someone selected by him to act as his coadjutor, repeats the prayer of admission and blesses with the sign of the cross the skull-cap which every monk must

wear. The oath of celibacy, however, is taken in the presence of the Abuna and is accompanied by ceremonies of a more elaborate nature. The candidate, having been brought into the presence of the Metropolitan, is placed in the midst of the assembled clergy; and then a circle of fires is lighted around him. This ceremony of purification concluded, the leather girdle of St. John the Baptist is bound about his loins, during which procedure the attending priests chant the requiem for the dead. The glaswa, a narrow strip of black cloth embroidered with a number of colored crosses, is then placed upon the shaven crown and the Abuna ends the rite with a blessing and by making the sign of the cross over the various parts of the candidate's body.

Monks are clothed in a sack of rough wool except those who are on or have made a pilgrimage, which entitles them to wear the yellow gown, and in addition they wear the rough leather girdle about their loins in imitation of John the Baptist. Often, in the interest of the mortification of the flesh, a heavy iron chain is substituted for this girdle.

Meat and milk-foods are not permitted except where the requirements of health demand them nor is the use of wine allowed. In addition to the vegetables and herbs which each monk grows for himself he is allowed a loaf of bread daily, baked by the official baker who takes flour from the common store. At all times the monk is required to eat moderately and to impose fasts upon himself in addition to those observed by the laity.

All monks are required to live in monasteries unless they have received a dispensation to do otherwise. Some are attached to chieftains and persons of importance as confessors, others make pilgrimages to Jerusalem or to the holy places in Abyssinia. The church in Jerusalem

is in charge of an abbot who is directly responsible to the Emperor for the spiritual affairs of his countrymen. An Abyssinian monastery is known to have existed in Jerusalem during the Middle Ages and during the 15th and 16th centuries there was an Abyssinian monastery, "San Stefano dei Mori", in Rome.

Hermits

In addition to monks there are hermits and anchorites who do not take vows and who live in deserted and lonely places practising the mortification of the flesh. They are extremely individualistic and have little or no connection with the Church.

Nuns

Nuns are not numerous nor are they important. Though they are required to live in communities, the scarcity of their numbers rarely permits this; and so it is usual to find them living alone. Occasionally a nun will have a small hut in some churchyard and spend her days in reading the Bible among the tombs.

Widows and virgins are carefully distinguished. A widow cannot take the final vows of monasticism until her husband has been dead for a considerable period unless she is sixty years old. It is especially prescribed for widows that they should not be irritable, talkative, or slanderous. Virgins are particularly enjoined not to become fat. Since the Abyssinian canons of beauty require women to be fat the last precept is in the nature of a practical safeguard against the temptations of the flesh.

Nuns must not eat meat except when the considerations of health demand it nor are they allowed to drink wine. At all times they are enjoined to eat moderately and to prescribe fasts for themselves in addition to those observed by the laity. Their duties are to pray much and to serve the sick.

CHAPTER V

LANGUAGE, BIBLE, CANONS, LITURGY

Language

The language of the Abyssinian Church is Ethiopic, or more correctly Ge'ez.[1] This is a Semitic tongue which entered Abyssinia with the Semitic invasions that crossed over the Red Sea from Southern Arabia some centuries B. C. and reached their height probably just before the beginning of the Christian era. Since the period of the great wave of immigration a gradual Semitic infiltration has taken place down to the present day. Of these early Semitic tribes one of the most important was the Ge'ez which settled in the north in the neighborhood of Aksum and gave its language to the Abyssinian Church.

Ge'ez is very similar to the language found in the Minao-Sabaic inscriptions of southern Arabia, and its characters seem to be developed from the Sabean. In fact two of the earliest extant Ge'ez inscriptions are written in Sabean letters.

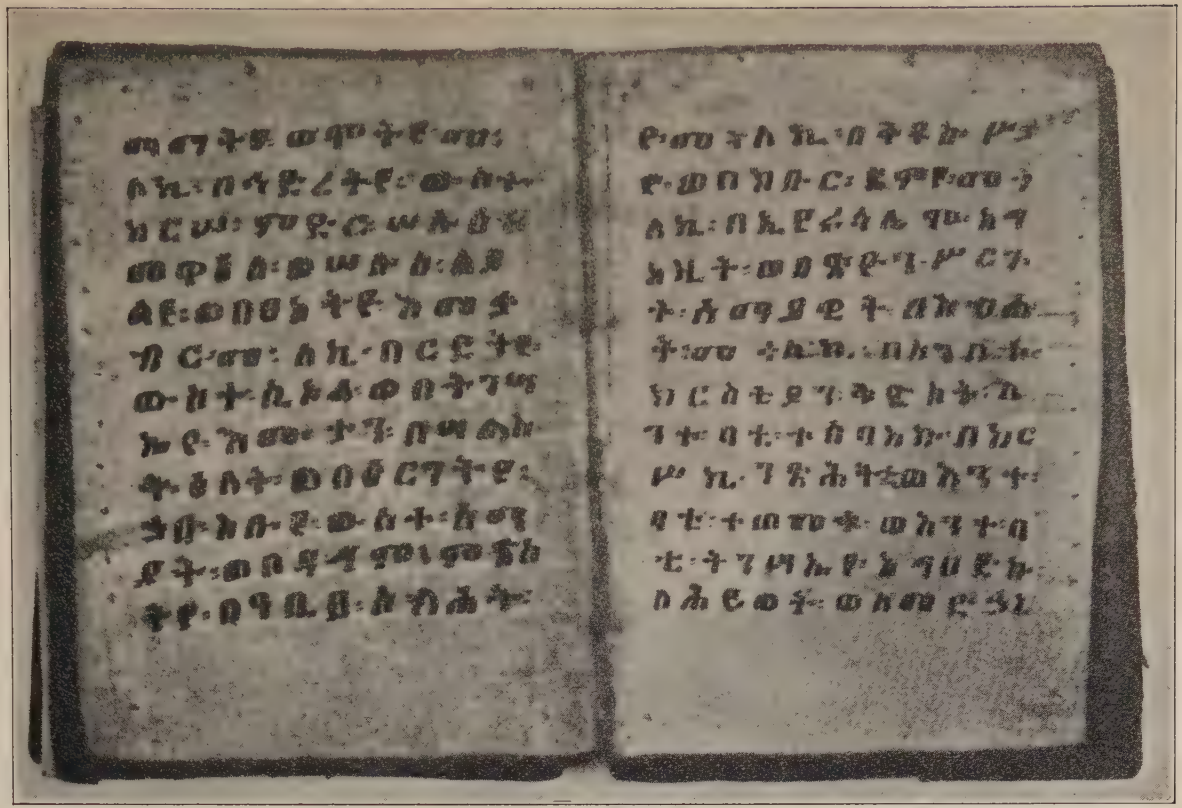
Originally Ge'ez, like every Semitic language, was written from right to left but at an early date it came to be written from left to right, and this is the method which we find in those inscriptions written in Sabean letters. Just when this change took place is not known

[1] There has been considerable discussion as to whether Ge'ez is the name of an original south-Arabian tribe and language which entered Abyssinia or the name of a tribe and language resulting from the intermarriage of the Semitic invaders with the native Abyssinians.

but it seems probably that it was due to Greek influence. Another radical departure from the Semitic was made in the matter of vocalization. Originally the vowels in Hebrew, for example, were not written until the seventh century of our era, when the Jewish doctors of Tiberias are said to have originated the present system of pointing, dots and dashes to represent vowels. When the vowels are written the text is said to be pointed, when unwritten, unpointed. Early in its history Ge'ez developed an ingenious system of pointing but radically different from that of any other Semitic language. Instead of inventing separate characters for each vowel as in Hebrew the consonants themselves were changed. Each form represented that consonant and one of the seven vowels.

While the Ge'ez system of vocalization is an ingenious one it is very cumbersome and has several defects. First: Instead of possessing only twenty-two characters for consonants and nine characters for vowels as in Hebrew, there are 267 different characters in Ge'ez. Moreover these characters are very similar in form and not always easy to distinguish. Second: There is no sign such as the "dagesh forte" as in Hebrew to indicate when the consonant is doubled. Third: There is no outward distinction between a vowelless consonant and the same consonant followed by a short "e".

From the beginning Ge'ez, though it became the official language of the Church, was a language of the minority of the people. Hence the Church services have always been in an unknown tongue. Gradually Amharic began to supersede Ge'ez and by the tenth century, the latter had ceased to be a spoken language. Today it is understood only by the more educated clergy of the Abyssinian Church and by a few foreign scholars.



A Book of Private Prayers in Ge'ez.

The Bible

Ethiopic chroniclers ascribe the translation of their Bible either to Frumentius in the fourth century, or to the Nine Saints in the fifth century; and assert that the translation was from the Arabic. Internal evidence is against both of these assumptions.

The Ethiopic Bible was not translated at one time but it seems certain that the various books were translated at different periods. Again the translation was revised from time to time. Not only does the style vary from book to book but also the same word is translated differently in the various books. Again some of the books are practically paraphrases of the original text while others are literal translations. Thus the work of translation varies considerably in quality.

It seems to be agreed generally that both the Old and New Testaments were translated from the Greek with the exception of the "Sinodos" which was translated from the Arabic. According to Dillmann the text of the historical books of the Old Testament reveals a knowledge of the Greek text but little insight into the Greek language. The Greek names of animals, plants, precious stones, and other terms are merely transliterated into Ethiopic. Again, the names of some of the books have been incorrectly Arabized, for example, Praxeis becomes Abraxis, and Apocalypse becomes Abukalampsis.

It also seems certain that the Ethiopic version of the Old Testament was made from the Septuagint. Those Hebrew words which are transliterated in the Septuagint are similarly translated in the Ethiopic version. Just which type of text of the Septuagint was used is

under dispute and cannot be settled until we have a critical text of the Ethiopic Old Testament.

The original type of text for the New Testament is also an open question. One type of Ethiopic text agrees with a Greek original current in the neighborhood of Antioch previous to the rise of the so-called Antiochian or Syrian text. The present Ethiopic text of the New Testament agrees sometimes with the oldest Greek uncials, sometimes with the "Western" text, and again in places it differs from both. The matter of text cannot be settled until we have a critical Ethiopic text of the New Testament.

In the earliest codices there are no divisions into chapters and verses. The complete Ethiopic text of the Bible seems certain to have been completed by the beginning of the sixth century. The first part of the New Testament to be translated is said to have been the Gospels and the last the Wisdom of Sirach (in A. D. 678).

There has been a considerable fluctuation in the Ethiopic canon from century to century and no two lists agree in their entirety. We append below a list usually given.

The Old Testament not only includes those books which are found in the Septuagint but also a number of others, such as the "Book of Enoch", the "Book of Jubilees" (the Kufale, or Little Genesis), the "Ascension of Isaiah," the "Rest of the Words of Baruch," etc., forty-six books in all, which are divided into four parts as follows:

(1) The Law: containing the five books of Moses, together with Joshua, Judges and Ruth—eight books in all—this is the Octateuch or as it is known in the Ethiopian Church, the Ont (law);

(2) The Kings: containing I and II Samuel, I and II

Kings, I and II Chronicles, I and II Ezra, Tobit, Judith, Esther, Job and Psalms—thirteen books in all.

(3) Solomon: containing Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Wisdom and Sirach—five books in all.

(4) Prophets: containing Isaiah, Jeremiah with Lamentations, Ezekiel, the twelve minor prophets, and I and II Maccabees (the two books of Maccabees were either lost or never translated. Those called by that name here are spurious productions)—eighteen books in all;

The New Testament, containing thirty-five books in all, is divided as follows:

(1) The Gospels: containing St. Matthew, St. Luke, St. Mark and St. John—four books in all;

(2) The Acts: one book;

(3) Paul: containing fourteen epistles, including the Pastoral Epistles, and the Epistle to the Hebrews;

(4) Apostolus: containing the General Epistles and the Apocalypse;

(5) Miscellaneous: containing the Shepherd of Hermas and Sinodos (containing the pseudo-Clementine or Apostolical Constitutions in two recensions, with the Apostolical Canons, the canons of various councils, etc.) —containing two books.

Canons

The canons, regulations with regard to Christian instruction and worship, of the Abyssinian Church are contained in the Sinodos and Didascalia, two works or rather compilations of ancient Church canons, probably dating from the second period of Ethiopic literature. These canons are closely associated with the New Testament.

The Sinodos, already mentioned as being classed as a

part of the New Testament, is composed of various elements and these are not always in the same order in different manuscripts. The elements referred to are: the Constitutions of the Apostles, the Statutes of the Apostles, the Canons of the Apostles; the canons of various councils—Nicea, Gangra, Sardica, Antioch, Neo-Caesarea, Ancyra, and Laodicaea; and various theological and pastoral treatises.

The Didascalia, originally written in Greek about the middle of the third century, seems to have been translated into Ge'ez from Arabic. The original composition, incorporated in a compilation of canons known as the Apostolic Constitutions in the fourth century, is no longer extant. There are Syriac, Latin and Arabic versions of the Didascalia but they differ among themselves and from the Ethiopic version with regard to subject matter. The Ethiopic Didascalia almost parallels the first seven books of the Apostolic Constitutions and stands midway between the short form represented by the Syrian version and the complete recension contained in the Apostolic Constitutions.

The Liturgy [1]

From the very first days of the Christian Church the central act of worship has been the Communion Service. The source of the Communion Service is contained in the following four accounts of the New Testament: (Matt. xxvi, 26-28; Mk. xiv 22-28; Lk. xxii, 19-20; I

[1] See S. A. B. Mercer *The Ethiopic Liturgy*. Milwaukee, 1915. This is the Ethiopic Liturgy now used by the Abyssinian Church translated from a modern manuscript specially prepared by His Beatitude Abuna Matewos, the Metropolitan of Abyssinia, and presented to Dr. Mercer. See also *Liturgies Eastern and Western* by F. E. Brightman. Vol. I, Oxford, 1896. Both these works contain ample bibliographies.

Cor. xi, 23-28). Around these four accounts the nucleus of every rite has gathered. While preserving these essential features, the growth and spread of the Church naturally produced variations in details. By the fourth century these various rites had crystallized into four great parent rites, namely, that of Antioch, Alexandria, Rome and Gaul, and from these rites all others may be said to have been derived.

As the founder of Christianity in Abyssinia received his consecration in Egypt and from the Patriarch of Alexandria, it may be assumed that he introduced the rite then prevailing at Alexandria. At all events the Ethiopic Liturgy is merely an expansion of the version of St. Mark, the rite used by the Coptic Church in Egypt. At first the liturgy as introduced into Abyssinia was probably the Greek[2], as it was in Alexandria; but after the Monophysite heresy, following the Egyptian Church, the liturgy must have been translated into the language of the country, namely Ge'ez. The Ethiopic Liturgy of the fifth century is substantially the same as the Greek St. Mark Liturgy of the same period, but with the beginning of the sixth century changes began to appear; and though in outline the two liturgies remained the same, yet in detail there were variations.

The liturgies of the various Eastern Churches are divided into the pro-anaphora and the anaphora. The pro-anaphora is merely that part of the service which comes before the anaphora, that is, from the beginning of the service to the Kiss of Peace; but if the Kiss of Peace precedes the Creed, then it ends with the latter.

[2] Several remnants of the Greek original still remain in the present liturgy though transliterated into Ethiopic. Dr. Mercer has printed the Greek.

The anaphora i. e. "offering up" refers to the Eucharistic sacrifice which is offered up to God at the altar and properly embraces the Thanksgiving, Consecration, and the accompanying Intercession. The term has been extended however, to include the whole of the Communion Service from the Sursum Corda to the Dismissal. Sometimes the Communion Service is divided into the "Mass of the Catechumens", those who are not yet Christians and must depart at the conclusion of this part of the service, and the "Mass of the Faithful", those who are Christians and are allowed to be present until the end of the entire service. These two terms however, do not exactly correspond to the pro-anaphora and the anaphora. The anaphora in the liturgies of the Eastern Churches corresponds to the Canon of the Mass.

While the Western Church has but one anaphora, the Canon of the Mass with its Preface, there are many anaphoras in each of the Eastern Liturgies. However, one of the numerous anaphoras is regarded as the standard form—the Anaphora of the Twelve Apostles in the Abyssinian Church—and the others are used on special days.

Tasfa Seyon made the first attempt to translate the Ethiopic Liturgy but the manuscript used by him is not known to exist. The manuscripts of the Ethiopic Liturgy which we now possess do not antedate the seventeenth century.

The title of the present liturgy of Abyssinia is, "The order of the Keddase; which is to be said by the presbyter and the deacon and the people; together with everything that is proper at this time according to the order of our fathers the Egyptians".[3] (See also Chapter XIV).

[3] Mercer. *The Ethiopic Liturgy*, p. 295.

CHAPTER VI

THEOLOGY [1]

Systematic theology is unknown in the Abyssinian Church. There has been and is much theological dispute [2] but none of the disputants have had either the ability or the inclination to set forth the theology of their Church in a clear and logical order.[3] Generally speaking, the theology of the Abyssinian Church is the theology of the first three Ecumenical Councils [4] and to this nothing has been added. In matters of dogma the Abuna is the last court of appeal and the final arbiter.

God

The nature and attributes of God are those of ortho-

[1] No adequate work on the theology of the Abyssinian Church has ever been written. Oertel's *Theologia Aethiopium,* Wittenberg, 1746, is merely a gleaning from Portuguese authors. Only the barest outline of the theology of the Abyssinian Church is attempted here and though the quotations are wholly confined to "The Ethiopic Liturgy" by Dr. Mercer they can be paralleled with similar extracts from "Le Rituel Ethiopien" of Chaine. The theology contained in the rites of the present Abyssynian Church confirms the accounts given us by the Portuguese authors and indicate that this theology has not changed since the introduction of Christianity into the country.

[2] See Chapter VII.

[3] The best native theological statement is that of Claudius. See Appendix III.

[4] These three councils are mentioned several times in the Liturgy: "The three hundred and eighteen orthodox who assembled in Nicea, and the one hundred and fifty in Constantinople, and the two hundred in Ephesus."—Mercer. *Ethiopic Liturgy,* p. 316.

dox Christianity. "We believe in one God, the Lord, the Father Almighty, the eternal maker of the heavens and the earth, the visible and the invisible." God is, "O eternal God, the first and the last, who hath neither beginning nor end, who is great in his counsel and mighty in his work and righteous in his purpose and strong in his might". Also, God is "Lord of knowledge and declarer of wisdom". "We believe in one God, maker of all creation"; that He is "Lord our God, good and merciful and holy" [5]; and "God of justice".[6]

The Holy Trinity

In addition to the statement of the Nicene Creed and the frequent use of the trinitarian formula, we have the following expressions: "Glory and honour are due unto the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, co-equal both now and ever and world without end. Amen"; and "Worship we the Father; worship we the Son; worship we the Holy Spirit, three in one and one in three" [7]

The Father

God the Father is "Father of the Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ", who "Didst send thine only Son into the world to bring back unto thee the lost sheep". God the Father is the Creator through the Son, "Through whom thou madest all things by thy will". It is from God the Father that the Holy Ghost proceeds, "Who proceedeth from the Father".

[5] "The Ethiopic Liturgy" by S. A. B. Mercer. Milwaukee, 1915, p. 348, 321, 325, 297.

[6] M. Chaine, *Le Rituel Ethiopien* (*Rituel du baptême*); Rome, 1913, p. 13.

[7] Mercer *op. cit.* p. 321 and *passim.*

The Son

With regard to the second Person of the Holy Trinity: "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of the Father, who was with him before the world was created, light of light, God of very God, begotten not made, equal with the Father in his godhead; by whom all things were made, but without him was not anything made, neither in heaven nor in earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and of Mary of the Holy Virgin; he was made man and was crucified for us in the day of Pontius Pilate, he suffered and died and was buried, and rose again from the dead the third day, as it is written in the holy scriptures; he ascended into the heavens and sat down on the right hand of his Father; he shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Again, "He became man in the last days and took up flesh of Mary, the Virgin, without the seed of man, and he was nurtured with man without sin and crime and without fraud in his mouth. Then he suffered and died in the body; he rose again on the right hand of the power, and he sent to us the Paraclete who came forth from the Father".

The Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost is co-equal with the other Persons of the Holy Trinity. "Glory and honour are due unto the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost co-equal both now and ever". Also, He is "The Holy Ghost, the life-giver, who is co-equal with these".

Again, "Worship we the Father, worship we the Son, worship we the Holy Spirit, three in one and one in three". The Holy Ghost was sent to the Church by Christ, "He sent us the Paraclete", yet the Holy Ghost "Came forth from the Father". The Procession is also mentioned in the Creed, "And we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father". In this theory of the Procession the Abyssinian Church is one with the Orthodox Eastern Church. The "filioque" addition of the Nicene Creed is rejected. In the preparation of the ministers, God is sought "Yea, O Lord our God, and we beseech thee to send thy Holy Spirit, upon this thy church and upon this Tabot". Again, following the Institution, comes the Invocation "That thou wouldst send thy Holy Ghost and power upon this bread and upon this cup".

Creation

Creation is God's handiwork, "We believe in one God, maker of all creation". While God is "O Creator" it is the Son "Through whom thou madest all things". God is "The eternal maker of heaven and earth and the visible and invisible". Hence God is the ruler of the universe, who "Gave a diverse law to the firmaments and the clouds and the sky, the line whereof hath not changed". God is also, since he is the Creator of the "visible and invisible" Creator of the angels, and hence He is "Lord our God, who sittest above the angels and archangels, the lords and the dominions, the cherubim and the seraphim, who wast before all creatures". Since God is the Creator the universe must be respected: "We say, therefore, that the Lord brought forth all good creation (the creation was originally good but was corrupted later),

spirit, life, body, and that which is good in all (all good proceeds from God): We say that the marriage is pure and undefiled and not unclean, for God created Adam and Eve, that they might multiply people". Hence flesh is not impure for "He did not repudiate the body".

The Abyssinian Church holds the Traducian doctrine of the soul.

There are nine orders of angels, ascending in the following order: Angels, Archangels, Princedoms, Authorities, Powers, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim, and Seraphim.

The Fall

Originally God's creation was good, "The Lord brought forth all good creation, spirit, life, body, and that which is good in all" but this was "Perverted by impure words"—"Because of the sin of our father Adam", and, "We believe that we take all their deeds upon us". Again, "Death, that came at first into the world through the enmity of Satan".

The Incarnation

God was the Mover in the Incarnation, who "Didst send thine only Son into the world to bring unto thee the lost sheep". The purpose of the Incarnation was the salvation of man, "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and of Mary, of the Holy Virgin; he was made man and was crucified for us in the days of Pontius Pilate, he suffered and died and was buried, and rose again from the dead the third day,—he ascended into the heavens and sat down on the right of the Father;

he shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead, and of his kingdom there shall be no end". As for Christ, "He alone joined man with God". The Incarnation came because "Lord our God, who by reason of thine unspeakable love towards mankind, didst send thine only Son into the world to bring back unto thee the lost sheep."

Concerning the nature of Christ the Abyssinian Church is Monophysite. Instead of believing in the two natures of Christ as defined by the Council of Chalcedon that Christ is perfect God and perfect Man, it is held that Christ has but one nature, a blending of the divine and of the human.

Sacraments

There is no word in the Abyssinian Church corresponding to our term sacrament, a term which was given a special meaning by scholastic philosophy; nor has a sacrament been defined. Generally speaking a sacrament in the Abyssinian Church is called a "mystery". Nor do sacraments work "ex opere operato" i. e. with magical effect regardless of the attitude of the recipient. "This is the blood, precious, true, of our Lord and our Saviour and our God, Jesus Christ, which is given for life and for salvation and for remission of sin *unto those who receive it in faith*". There are seven sacraments, or rather, what we regard as seven sacraments are held to be such by the Abyssinian Church.

Baptism

"We believe in one baptism for the remission of sins". This washing away of sins is spoken of in the baptismal

service, "That the demons, who have taken residence in us because of the sin of our father Adam, may be driven out".

The Abyssinians were accused by the Portuguese of repeating the baptismal rite upon the Feast of Epiphany, but such was not the case—"We believe in one baptism for the remision of sins". The rite practised upon the Feast of Epiphany is merely a renewal of the baptismal vows. The Portuguese also accused the Abyssinians of using six invalid baptismal formulas. Today, trine immersion of the infant has become the general practice unless the infant is dangerously ill, then affusion is used. A male child is baptized upon the fortieth day after birth, a female child upon the eightieth day. The baptism of adults is rare except in the case of converts. Adults are immersed three times. Baptism is administered to women by deaconesses.[8] (For further details see confirmation below and Chapter XII).

Confirmation

Confirmation, as in the early practice of the Christian Church, follows immediately upon baptism. The baptismal-confirmation rite, as in the Greek Orthodox Church, is administered by the priest and not by a bishop as in the Western Church. The anointing of the child, the bestowal of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and its reception of communion immediately after baptism, constitute the rite of confirmation. Confirmation is called the "holy mystery of confirmation". (For further details see Chapter XII).

[8] The deaconesses are not the ministers of the rite but only immerse the candidate.

The Holy Eucharist

The rite used for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is explained elsewhere.

Of particular importance are the words of Institution. In addition to the rite in ordinary use, "the Liturgy of All Apostles", there are thirteen other anaphoras and in each of these the words of Institution differ. The words of Institution in "the Liturgy of All Apostles" are: "Take, eat, this bread is my body, which is broken for you for the forgiveness of sins"—"Take, drink, this cup is my blood, which is shed for you and for many". The consecration is called melawat, i. e. "change".

There is a difference of opinion as to whether or not the Abyssinian Church believes in transubstantiation. The weight of evidence seems to be that the Abyssinian Church holds a doctrine of real presence but not transubstantiation. [9]

Communion is administered in both kinds, but never privately. Immediately after reception the deacon gives

[9] It is well to remember that transubstantiation is inseparable from scholastic philosophy and that technically speaking belief in transubstantiation by the Abyssinian Church is impossible. While a number of travellers have asserted that the Abyssinian Church holds the doctrine of transubstantiation they mean the popular and erroneous idea of transubstantiation. No doubt individual Abyssinians as well as Europeans and American Christians believe that the consecrated bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ in a crude sense but such a belief has not been officially accepted by the Abyssinian Church. The testimony of the Jesuits was that the Abyssinian Church did not believe in transubstantration and such evidence is almost irrefutable. For evidence of the belief held about the consecrated bread and wine see *The Epiclesis in the Ethiopic Liturgy* by Dr. S. A. B. Mercer, in the "Paul Haupt Festschrift", Leipzig 1926; which contains the Ethiopic and English translations of the epiclesis in ten of the anaphoras. Perpetual reservation, however, is probably uncanonical as in the Coptic Church. Again, it might be well to bear in mind that liturgical language is always highly colored and especially in the East.

water to those who have received in order that they may rinse their mouths. The wine is made before each service by the deacon who makes it from dried grapes and water. Leavened bread is used except upon Maundy Thursday when unleavened bread is used. The sacrament is reserved in the Tabot.[10]

Penance

The doctrine of penance as in other branches of the Catholic Church is based upon the well-known command of our Lord. This command has been adopted in the Communion Service as follows: "Who didst breathe upon the face of thine holy disciples and pure ministers, saying to them, Receive the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye remit, they are retained; thou hast vouchsafed to thy pure ministers, who do the priest's office at all times in this holy church, that they should remit sin on earth, should bind and loose every bond of iniquity, etc." Again, "O Lord God, Father Almighty, eternal; it is thou who healest our soul and our body and our spirit, because thou saidst by the mouth of thine only Son, our Lord and our God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, which thou speakest to our father Peter. Thou art a rock, I will build it for mine holy Church and unto thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; what thou hast bound on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what thou hast loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven".

[10] Dowling, *The Abyssinian Church,* p. 30. Occasional reservation is certainly in use. On the Feast of Epiphany the priests communicate at the streams where the ceremonies take place, and the last sacrament is administered in the homes of stricken people—as the service of Holy Communion cannot be celebrated outside of a church it is reasonable to suppose that the sacrament was carried to the above places.

In the Communion Service there is no general confession said by the people, but absolution is given twice; once in the Mass of the Catechumens, in the Absolution of the Son, and again in the Mass of the Faithful, in the Prayer of Penitence. Auricular confession is the rule of the Church and confession is made only to those in priest's orders. While times for regular confession do not seem to be fixed yet the Fast of Hodadi and particularly Good Friday are appointed as special days for confession. Confession is demanded as a requisite for the sacrament of unction and he who fails to make a death bed confession and to receive absolution is sternly denied burial in the churchyard. Absolution is said to include a blow over the shoulder administered with a branch of the Woira tree as a sign that the penitent has been delivered from sin and Satan.

Unction [11]

The sacrament of unction is not only administered to those 'in extremis' but also to those who are merely ill. Ordinarily the presence of seven priests is required as in the Orthodox Eastern Church, but a smaller number, even one, is sufficient. When possible, the

[11] This account of unction is entirely indebted to *Le Rituel Ethiopien* (Rituel de L'extrême-onction)—Ethiopic text with Latin translation, Rome, 1914, M. Chaine. The rite of unction has come down to us in a double form, the one from the Coptic, with a few modifications; the other, which is thought to be an original work. The former work dates from the reign of Galawdewos (1540-1549) and its title is *Liber lampadis*. The Ethiopic title is *Mashafa Kandil* i. e. "The Book of Light." The latter work dates from the reign of Zara Yaqob (1433-1467) and its title is *Liber Substantiae*. The Ethiopic title is *Mashafa Bahreja*, which may be translated "Book of Fundamentals".

The latter is not exactly a ritual but rather a book of instruction regarding unction and confession.

Both of these rites presuppose a church service with the sick man

person who is ill is taken to the church, but if this cannot be done, he is anointed at his home. For the anointing both oil and water are used, separately, and these are blessed by the priest on each occasion. Water is not essential. Confession is a part of the rite, and after absolution and the anointing, Holy Communion is administered. The rite is reserved for baptized Christians. (For descriptive details of the rite see Chapter XVII).

Holy Orders

The three orders of the Catholic Church in addition to several minor orders are maintained. Two of these orders are bestowed by the Abuna who has received his commission from the Church, and were instituted by Christ, who "Didst breathe upon the face of thine holy disciples and pure ministers, saying to them, Receive the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain; they are retained; thou hast vouchsafed to thy pure ministers, who do the priest's office at all times in this holy church, that

present: Not only do the responses of the congregation indicate this but also the chief priest "remains before the altar" (p. 47 Chaine). Again, "But if the sick man is unable to go to church" (p. 81 Chaine) the priests hold the service of unction in the church and then go to his house to anoint him. "Behold we have described on behalf of those who are sick in their homes the rite which the priests shall hold in the church" (p. 81 Chaine). In other words the rite of unction always takes place in the church whether the sick man can be present or not. Dr. Chaine has called this service of unction, "extreme unction". In practice extreme unction in the Roman Catholic Church is only administered 'in extremis' (when the person is about to die) though in theory there is a considerable difference of opinion among Roman theologians. In theory at least as indicated above the Abyssinian Church does not agree with the Roman practice and hence we speak of the sacrament of unction rather than of extreme unction.

they should remit sin on earth, should bind and loose every bond of iniquity". (In addition see Chapter III).

Holy Matrimony

Holy Matrimony is a sacrament and is solemnized with a nuptial mass. This tie is considered binding and should it be broken by divorce excommunication follows automatically. (See Chapter XV).

Eschatology

"We believe that the just dead shall be raised [12] and sinners and transgressors be punished according to their deeds". "We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life to come". Of Christ it is said that, "He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead".

Though the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory is rejected, the souls of the departed remain in an intermediate state. Masses are said for the dead but the number of masses required has not been determined. Prayers are offered for the dead, "Remember, Lord, our Fathers and our brethren and our sisters, who have fallen asleep and are gone to rest in the orthodox faith, give them rest".

The Virgin Mary

The Virgin Mary occupies a unique place in the Abyssinian Church. Her intercession is continually asked:

[12] The physical resurrection of the body is believed. Harris states that he saw men carrying the amputated part or parts of their bodies in order to preserve them so that the body would be entire upon the day of resurrection.

"Our Lady Mary, mother of God, offer up our prayer that our sins may be forgiven". She is "The very pleader for the race of mankind". Again, she is the "ever-virgin parent of God", and "immaculate Mary". She is not immaculate in the sense that she was born without sin but in that she was specially prepared by the Holy Ghost. Her assumption is celebrated during August. The "Hail Mary" is used in a modified form.

Saints

The intercession of saints is one of the most prominent features of Abyssinian Christianity. Intercession is asked from all the saints but the most favored saints are the Virgin Mary, St. Michael the Archangel, St. George, and Takla Haymanot.

As in other branches of the Catholic Church each church has a patron saint, whose festival is observed with great pomp and ceremony.

CHAPTER VII

THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY

The Abyssinian Church has been distracted by violent theological controversies and much of it as we shall see was not without political causes.

The first dispute of which we have record occurred in the early part of the reign of Zara Yaqob (1433-1467). It is not surprising that a number of theological controversies occurred at this time for the monarch himself was a great religious reformer and a number of extant works are attributed to him. The king's chief effort however, was directed against the magic and superstition of the country and this crusade aroused a bitter counter attack. The chief theological discussion of his reign was concerned with the "Persons", or "Faces" as the Abyssinian theologians express it, of the Holy Trinity. The principal disturber of peace was a theologian named Za Mikael who attacked the doctrine that Christ "was made in the likeness of man" and supported his contention by stating that the accepted opinion was anthropomorphic, for how could God "with three Persons be One in Substance". This attack was merely a denial of our Lord's humanity. A synod held by the king in 1439 condemned the heretic in a decision which reaffirmed the Monophysite position.. It was in this year also and as a result of a theological controversy between Abba Giyorgis and a Frank that an Abyssinian

embassy was sent to the Vatican and was invited to the Council of Florence.

During the reign of Baeda Maryam (1467-1478), son and successor of Zara Yaqob, the doctrine of extreme Eutychianism[1] was introduced into Abyssinia by some preachers who came from Syria and Egypt. Thus the seeds of future controversy were sown.

Theological controversy however, reached its climax during the Portuguese period when under the influence of and in opposition to the Jesuits old formularies were carefully scrutinized and renewed interest was aroused. Thus in 1604 King Za Dengel (1603-1604) called Pero Paez to his court and requested him to explain the controversy that had arisen between the Jesuits and the Abyssinian theologians. A number of monks were present to ask questions and the discussion centered around the two natures of Christ. Paez having explained the doctrine as held by the Catholic faith, the monks asserted that after the resurrection only one nature remained. Which one was it? As the monks were obliged to admit that the deity of Christ remained, Paez pointed out that after the resurrection the human body of our Lord was seen and touched by St. Thomas. The subtility of the Jesuit's logic was too much for them and finally they admitted that Christ was perfect God and perfect Man, though still stoutly maintaining that after the Union they were not two but one nature. It seems evident that the difficulty arose from the Abyssinian theologians being unable to distinguish between

[1] So named from Eutyches an abbot who lived in Constantinople about the middle of the fifth century. He held that after the Incarnation there is only one nature, a doctrine which he explained by asserting that Christ is of two natures, but not in two. That is to say, Christ's human nature was absorbed in the divine. He also held that Christ's human body was not of the same nature (consubstantial) with our human bodies.

"nature" and "person". The king however, was convinced of the truth of the Catholic position but died soon after.

Susneyos came to the throne in 1607 as Seltan Sagad I (1607-1632). The new monarch was kindly disposed towards the new faith. Paez' ability as an architect, the conversion of many nobles, the holiness of the new converts and the knowledge imparted by their foreign teachers, made a great impression. Royal edicts began to be issued which were favorable to the new religion.

The conference of 1604 however, had not silenced the Abyssinian party but only served to sharpen its wits and ardor. Discussions continued and in 1623 the leading ecclesiastics and nobles of the kingdom assembled in a conference. This time the discussion which was only indirectly concerned with the natures of Christ, turned upon the question of Christ's Unction. Some of the disputants, like Azzaj Za Dengel and Abba Kefla Krestos, asserted that the Union of the Divinity and Manhood of Christ served as the Unction of His body. Others maintained that the Father had been the Anointer, the Son the Anointed, and the Holy Ghost the Unction. The king demanded both parties to submit evidence for their assertions and finally agreed with the latter party. Kefla Krestos would not submit to the decision and was accordingly flogged and Za Dengel was excommunicated.

By this time the religious condition of the country had reached a crisis. Though the king had not yet formally submitted to Rome strict edicts had been issued which practically affirmed the conversion of the country to the new faith. Rebellion after rebellion arose and were put down with severity. Paez now wrote to Rome, about 1623, requesting additional help but when the new mission arrived in Abyssinia in 1624, Paez was dead.

Susneyos formally submitted to Rome in 1626 and took the oath of obedience to the Holy See. Civil War again broke out. In all these rebellions in defense of the ancient faith the mountaineers of Begemeder took a leading part. The new faith was not popular with the people and hence in 1632 the old faith was restored by royal edict. Susneyos however, died a few years later still professing the Catholic faith. His son and successor, Fasiladas (1632-1667) immediately banished the Jesuits and the Roman mission came to an end.

One result of the Portuguese mission was the division of the Abyssinian Church into two theological groups; the party of Debra Libanos, which has been called the High Church Party; and the Party of Ewostatewos (Eustathius), which has been called the Low Church Party. In other words the cleavage was largely a quarrel between the two great monastic orders. The center of controversy was now the Unction of Christ, and it is easy to see that the succeeding disputes around this issue were merely efforts of the Monophysites to ward off the ever present danger of the Catholic doctrine of the two natures of Christ.

During the reign of Fasiladas the "Unctionists" or "Gebatoch" produced the following formula, "Through Unction Christ was Son consubstantial with the Father", which formula, with a few modifications, was later adopted by the Eustathians or the Party of Gojam as they were sometimes called since most of its adherents belonged to that province. The party of Debra Libanos countered with the formula, "By Union He was made consubstantial with the Father", that is to say, the human nature of Christ was absorbed by the divine nature through Unction. This was merely an expression of the orthodox party of the Church with regard to

the one nature of Christ. From henceforth the battle-cries became "Unction" and "Union". The former party or the heretics were excommunicated by the Echage Batra Giyorgis, but naturally this produced little effect.

Yohannes I (1667-1682), who succeeded Fasiladas, called a synod in 1681, in which Akala Krestos the chief spokesman for the Eustathians reaffirmed the old formula of his party and was answered by the formula of the orthodox party. As the Party of Debra Libanos had the weight of political authority upon their side Akala Krestos was condemned.

During the reign of Dawit (1716-1721) the Eustathians came into the ascendancy for a brief period and the adherents of Debra Libanos were severely persecuted. Finally the arrival of a new Abuna from Egypt calmed the situation somewhat when he attempted a reconciliation with the formula, "By Union the Son is only begotten Son and by Unction He became Christ". The Debra Libanos Party accepted this pronouncement as a victory for their side.

There was now peace until the reign of King Iyasu II (1730-1755) in the 20th year of whose reign a Syrian named George visited Abyssinia and was soon joined by an Abyssinian monk named Abba Eshate. Curious to relate, the old opponents, the Eustathians and the Debra Libanos Party, now united against the new heresy and excommunicated and expelled its advocate. A new development and a final episode in the Unction-Union controversy now appeared among the Eustathians in Tigre. The attempt was made to side-step the Unction of the Son of God by the Holy Ghost by asserting that the Holy Ghost was merely the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, in other words, that Christ had anointed himself. The formula for the new doctrine was, "Christ

the Son Anointing". That is to say the humanity of Christ was reduced to nothing. He was merely man in appearance.

Heretofore theological controversy in Abyssinia had centered around the Nature of Christ and the Unction of Christ, now the issue became concerned with the Birth of Christ. This discussion first arose in the Debra Libanos Party and was known as the "Sost Ledat" or the "Three Births". This doctrine asserted that Christ was born: (1) of the Father, from all eternity; (2) of the Virgin Mary, in time; (3) of the Holy Ghost. The Eustathians of Tigre immediately answered the new doctrine by cutting down the last two births to one, hence they became known as the adherents of the "Knife Faith" (Karra Haymanot). Out of this controversy came the proverb, "The faith we once had was Union and Unction, then when they brought in the doctrine of the Knife there was no flesh left".

The Tigrine doctrine of the "Two Births" acquired considerable prominence during the latter half of the 18th century largely owing to the influence of Mikael Sehul the governor of Tigre. Bruce found this doctrine well entrenched at Gondar in 1770 but by 1804 the "Three Births" had gained the ascendency and the Echage, Walda Yonas, expelled from Gondar those who denied it, forcing them to take refuge in Tigre.

It was not until 1817, during the reign of Egwala Seyon (1801-1818), that an Abuna, Qerilos, championed the Tigrine doctrine. However, the triumph lasted a short time, only while the Abuna lived in Tigre (1816-1819) and was backed by the Tigrine clergy. When called to Gondar he found the "Three Births" party strongly entrenched under the powerful influence of Ras Gugsa who was supported by King Iyoas II

(1818-1821), who had succeeded Egwala Seyon, and was forced to retire to Tigre. Supported by the Dajazmach[3] Sabagadis, Qerilos retaliated by forcing all his opponents in Tigre to accept the "Two Births" doctrine. One of his important opponents, Gabra Masih, was cast into prison but was released after a hunger strike of thirteen days.

The province of Shoa now entered upon the scene. Formerly it had been subject to the rule of the Negus at Gondar but now had become the most powerful state in Abyssinia. Towards the end of the 18th century, this province had been converted to the "Three Births" doctrine by a priest from Gondar named Bassana. In 1840 this faith was made compulsory.

The suppressed party in Shoa retaliated by accusing two prominent ecclesiastics of the Debra Libanos Party of a heresy concerned with the question of the possibility of an embryo in the womb sinning. The Ras of Gondar, Ali, reproached the king of Shoa, Sahela Sellase (the grandfather of Menelik II), for appointing such ecclesiastics. Indignant, Sahela Sellase had the two clerics tried for heresy and they were condemned.

The "Two Births" party not yet defeated found a champion in the new Abuna, Abba Salama IV, who immediately threatened Sahela Sellase with excommunication, which had little result as the Abuna himself was soon forced to take refuge in Tigre. However, Kassa, the Dajazmach of Dambaya[4], found it to his interest to support the Abuna and later was rewarded by being crowned in 1855 "King of Kings of Ethiopia". Upon

[3] Dajazmach i. e. "Keeper of the Gate", later became a title for generals of the army and governors of provinces.

[4] A district near Lake Tsana. Formerly Lake Tsana had a number of names and one of them was Dambaya. Roughly this district corresponds to the present province of Amhara.

coronation he took the name of Theodore. He now undertook a crusade against Shoa and in one battle defeated Khaylu Malakat, son and successor of Sahela Sellase. This victory was followed by a synod which Theodore called at Azazo in order to reconcile the contending parties.

This synod was something of a farce, as Theodore, who prided himself upon his theological knowledge, demanded that all parties accept Abuna Salama as the chief ecclesiastic of the Church. When the Abuna was accepted the king replied, "You are heretics from the moment you differ in opinion from the Abuna and me, the defender and upholder of the Church. Abjure your errors or the executor will take off your heads." The important members of the "Three Births" party were confined in prison on bread and water and finally submitted.

Upon the suicide of Theodore after his defeat by the British at Magdala in 1868 Yohannes IV (1872-1889) came to the throne. Menelik, son of Khaylu Malakat, having been imprisoned after the latter's defeat by Theodore escaped in 1866; he supported the "Three Births" party, but upon the accession of Yohannes submitted to him. When ordered by the latter to expel the Italian missionary Massaia, he did so.

Yohannes, like his predecessor, supported the "Two Births" faction, and at once began to persecute their opponents. In a synod he submitted his own confession of faith which was pure Eutychianism. The members of the "Three Births" party who became sarcastic and criticized had their tongues cut out. The final result was a royal decree of uniformity which demanded absolute submission from all. Those who refused to submit were killed with ruthless cruelty.

Yohannes was succeeded by Menelik II (1889-1914) and a new era began in Abyssinia. He was not only the founder of the Abyssinian Empire but also brought his country into contact with the modern world and deserves the title of Menelik the Great. The ruthless methods formerly employed in the old theological controversies gradually subsided.

At present there are three schools of theological thought[5] in Abyssinia: (1) the *ya-segale* (son of the flesh), which maintains that Jesus in the flesh is Son of Mary only and that his Divine nature was later infused into him by God. They do not admit Christ's divinity as a man. (2) the *gebat* (unction) which asserts that he only became a participant of Divinity when he was anointed by the Holy Ghost after his baptism in the river Jordan; (3) the *tawahedo* (unity) who are the orthodox churchman or the true Monophysites.

[5] These have been often designated as sects but such is not the case. With the exception of a few Abyssinian Uniats the Abyssinian Church is not divided.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHURCH BUILDING

Travellers have asserted, perhaps with some exaggeration, that there are more churches in Abyssinia than in any other part of Christendom. Often there are several churches in a small village. To erect a church

The Church at Korata.

is an act of Christian piety and he who does so is thought to have been forgiven all his sins.

The oldest churches of Abyssinia are the famous rock churches of Lalibala which the traditions gathered by

Alvarez in the sixteenth century assigned to the emperor Lalibala, who lived about 1200. It is certain that some of these churches date from that early period though most of them were probably constructed at later intervals.

At least ten of these churches remain. In each case they have been constructed by excavating the volcanic rock, sometimes merely a crevice in the vertical wall of the cliffs, sometimes cut out of the horizontal rock. The latter type was begun by tracing the plan of the church upon the ground and then digging trenches around it until the large block which was to form the church had been isolated. When the proper height had been attained the center of the rock was carved out in order to form the interior of the church.

The largest and handsomest of these churches is that of the Saviour of the World. It has the form of a rectangle with five naves formed by four rows of columns containing seven square pillars each, pillars that sustain the arches in a semicircle and the roof of the church which is horizontal. The interior arches are merely ornamental and do not support the roof since the church is cut out of a solid block of rock. At the west end of the church there is a vestibule and at the east end the sanctuary which is formed by a large apse and two small apses. A peculiar feature regarding the latter is that the exterior wall is straight and does not indicate that apses are within. The exterior walls in places are 6½ feet thick. The Church of the Virgin is also a basilica but with three naves and two rows of columns containing five pillars each. These pillars also sustain arches and a horizontal roof. At the extremity of each nave there are apses similar to those of the Saviour of the World. The west façade contains three doors and each

A Rock-Church at Lalibala.

of the lateral façades has a porch. One of the most venerated of these churches is the Church of Golgotha which is also rectangular and contains the sepulchre of the Negus Lalibala. This church also contains two chapels, the one has a nave and some columns, the other is high and narrow. Alvarez saw two stone images of St. Peter and St. John in this church. Another interesting church is that of St. George which is cruciform in shape.

A few of the above churches have courtyards which also are hollowed out of the solid rock. Some of these churches contain paintings, both on the walls and on the ceiling; others are decorated with geometrical designs cut in the stone. Much of the tracery is beautifully chiselled. The west façades of several have projections at the top.

Legend states that both the design and the site of these churches were revealed to Lalibala in a vision and that angels continued work while the laborers slept, but traditions gathered by Alvarez attributed these churches to white men, who worked for Lalibala under the direction of Sidi-Meskal a converted Arab. It is not known whether these men came from Egypt or from Palestine but the form and decorations of the churches would suggest either place.

There are also similar rock churches at Agro, Sokota, Belbela, Ghorgis, and near Agula a short distance from the coast. These churches are only imitations of Lalibala and are inferior and of a more recent date.

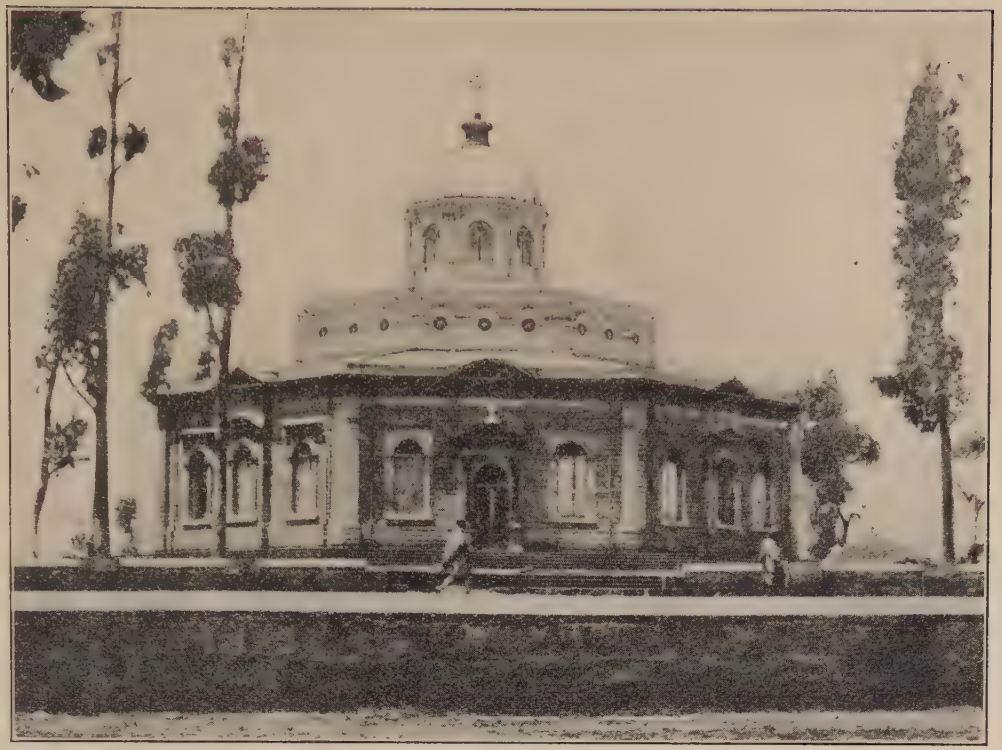
In addition to these ancient churches Abyssinia possesses a considerable variety of sacred edifices. The arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century was the occasion of much architectural activity and some of these embassies from Portugal contained masons and carpen-

ters.[1] In 1612 the Jesuits settled at Quatela, a district in Gojam, and built their first church, a basilica. This was soon followed by a number of similar churches, a few of which remain; especially noteworthy is the one at Aksum. At Taconda the church architecture like other buildings, as well as ideas and customs, has been influenced by its proximity to the coast. Here the churches are square stone buildings with a low square tower on a flat roof. The interiors are bare and uninteresting. At Asmara the church is square and built of stone with beams of wood projecting in rows. Generally speaking the churches of the province of Tigre are of a square stone variety.

The typical church of Abyssinia and the one usually described is the round church of the provinces of Amhara and Shoa. These churches, especially those in the country, are generally placed upon prominent hills and are surrounded by a circular plot of ground which is used as a cemetery. Somewhat like the English village churchyard with its venerable yew trees, the Abyssinian cemetery contains juniper trees. Often the grounds are planted with reeds and shrubs. The whole is enclosed by a stone wall which is pierced with a gate.

With the exceptions noted above the Abyssinian church is a circular structure and roughly built; with exterior walls of wattle, plastered with mud and whitewashed. In the vicinity of Addis-Abebba due to the

[1] The most interesting architectural ruin from the Portuguese period is the famous bridge which spans the Blue Nile at Alata about 20 miles south of Lake Tsana where the river passes through a narrow gorge. This bridge is about 225 feet long, about 37 feet wide, and consists of eight irregular arches. The earliest bridge was constructed by the Portuguese Jesuits in 1626 and had but one arch, still described as such by Bruce. The structure is not straight but forms an angle, the three northern arches inclining to the west.



Church of St. Michael, in Addis-Abebba

scarcity of wood, the exterior wall is of stone. Sometimes, in addition to the four openings in this exterior wall which serve as doors, each quartered with the compass, there are small apertures for windows. The roof is conically shaped, thatched with grass, rarely covered with tin or wood, and is surmounted at its apex with a cross of iron or brass. Frequently the cross is silver-gilded and often has its points tipped with ostrich eggs. Whether these ostrich eggs originated as a decorative feature or are a vestige from the old pre-Christian religion of Abyssinia is not known. Occasionally the eaves of the roof are flush with the exterior wall, but generally they extend over five or six feet, and supported by crude poles in a manner of a rustic arbor, form a narrow porch around the entire building. Often this porch is left open but more frequently it is latticed up to half its height by a closely woven paling.

The interior of the church is not one circular room but has three divisions corresponding in purpose to the fore-court, the holy, and the Holy of Holies of the Jewish Temple; and to the nave, choir and sanctuary of the Western Church.

The first division upon entering from the porch is a passage called the "Qene Mahalet." This corridor which is about eight feet wide has a low ceiling, often not more than five feet high, and is separated from the rest of the interior by a wall concentric to the exterior wall. In other words the "Qene Mahalet" is a passage eight feet wide, five feet high, extending around the entire building. This division may be called the nave because it is reserved for laymen, who except upon special occasions such as the celebration of the Holy Communion, are not allowed to penetrate farther. The "Qene Mahalet" possesses a number of decorative and useful features. To

the right of the main entrance from the porch is a seat of honor which is reserved for priests and scribes. Here also is the vestry which does not seem to be clearly defined. The inner wall of the passage is covered with paintings. The floor of the corridor is strewed with green rushes or covered with mats and occasionally with rugs. Under the floor are vaults in which the priests are permitted to be buried.

Opening off the "Qene Mahalet" are doors which lead into another circular passage, or rather a circular room, in the center of which is a small square room. This is the second division of the church and is called the "Maqdas". It is reserved for the officiating priests and into it laymen are not allowed to enter except when they receive the Holy Communion and for this purpose a small corner of the room has been marked off for them by what might be called a rude altar rail. This division of the church also has ornaments and features peculiar to itself. Lying on the floor are the drums used in the service and hanging along the walls are cotton bags which contain the bones of the dead.

The square room in the center of the "Maqdas", with sides extending up to the roof, is the third division of the church and is called the "Qedus Qedusan", i, e. the Holy of Holies. It too, like the inner wall of the "Qene Mahalet" is covered with paintings though they are partially hidden by draperies. Entrance into this compartment is through a small wooden door which is kept unlocked and opened only during the service but even then the interior is concealed by a veil. None but the clergy may enter this inner sanctuary. Within there is an oblong altar of masonry or more frequently merely a wooden board resting upon upright posts and covered with a stone slab. Several altars have been seen which

Tabot of the Church in Addis-Abebba

were plated with a considerable amount of gold. Within the "Qedus Qedusan" are kept the communion vessels, the service books, and other appurtenances of the services; but most important of all is the Tabot which rests upon the altar like a tabernacle and is surmounted by a canopy.

The Tabot is a small oblong wooden box with a circular hole cut through the top in order that the chalice may be inserted. Usually there is the emblem of the cross or a passage of scripture on the outside and occasionally an upright cross is placed on the top. The original Tabot, of which all others are copies, is preserved in the Cathedral at Aksum and purports to be the original ark of the covenant containing the tables of the Law which tradition affirms was stolen by Menelik I from the Temple in Jerusalem during the time of Solomon.[2] The Tabot is the most important feature of every church. Its blessing by the Abuna, to whom the Tabots are carried for that purpose, constitutes the consecration of the church. Upon the presence of the Tabot the sanctity of a church depends and without it services cannot be held. Should the Tabot be accidentally polluted by the touch of a deacon or a layman it must be purified and reblessed by a bishop. When carried in processions such

[2] Queen Makeda, one of the mythical rulers of Ethiopia, is affirmed by native tradition to have been the Queen of Sheba. This legend is embodied in the Ethiopic work "Kebra Nagast", i. e. the "Glory of Kings" the purpose of which was to add lustre to the reigning dynasty. The story relates that as a result of Makeda's or the Queen of Sheba's famous visit to King Solomon that monarch was eventually provided with an heir who, when he attained manhood, paid a visit to his royal father. The son, whose name was Menelik, displayed his filial affection by proceeding to steal the ark of the covenant out of the Temple and taking it back to Abyssinia with him, where it has since remained. Another result of Makeda's visit to Jerusalem was that in her son Menelik she founded the Solomonian dynasty which—with the exception of the Zague dynasty during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries—ruled over Abyssinia until modern times.

as on the Festival of Epiphany, the Tabot is carefully concealed by a cover, and everyone prostrates himself before it on passing. To the Tabot each Christian must sometime during his life make a vow and offer oblations in order that he may be buried in consecrated ground when he dies. Formerly, previous to a battle against the heathen, the Tabot was removed from the church and carried among the soldiers, perhaps in imitation of the ancient Israelitish custom of taking the ark to war. Several travellers have been within the Holy of Holies and have given us descriptions of the interior:

"At Azteklesan we managed by the payment of a small sum to a liberal-minded priest, to get admitted into the Kedesta Kedestan, or Holy of Holies and to see a sight which is rightly reserved only for the clergy. It was exceedingly dark and the wax taper which lighted us burnt but feebly; however, we contrived to see a sort of double table (evidently the altar) or whatnot, covered with drapery, which the priest removed with fear and trembling least any infidel should be lurking outside and get a glimpse. All that this drapery covered was a square bit of wood (the Tabot) wrapped in many pocket handkerchiefs and covered with certain talismanic (?) signs and letters of the old Ge'ez writing. [3]

"The custodians seemed to know very well that they were doing wrong, and displayed huge anxiety to get the thing over as quickly as possible. They hurried us up the rickety steps, opened the door of the sanctuary, took great care to keep us as far off as possible, and kept exclaiming, 'Now that is all, I hope you are satisfied. Let us go away again. You ought really to give us some more dollars for what we have done.' There was however, really next to nothing to see. In the darkness I

[3] Bent. *The Sacred City of the Ethiopians,* London, 1893, pp. 81.

could just make out the tabernacle inside the holy of holies. It was a kind of ark, covered with cheap draperies and surmounted by a crucific (?)" [4]

It was previously noted that the church building is always divided into three divisions. Ignoring the old basilican churches this threefold division is not always the case even with modern churches. At Asmara there

The Church of St. Raguel, in Entotto.

is no intervening wall between the Qene Mahalet and the Maqdas. The modern square churches are also divided into three divisions except that the divisions are square instead of round.

When a church is to be built the site with its surrounding plot of ground is carefully selected and a fence

[4] Vivian. *Abyssinia,* London 1901, p. 283.

thrown around the whole. A small hut is constructed within the inclosure and the Tabot is placed within it. The latter act is accomplished with much ceremony. These temporary arrangements are allowed to stand for some time and are perhaps a sort of consecration of the ground. Next, those who are accustomed to build churches are consulted with regard to the work, laborers are collected, and an overseer appointed. Then the material is collected. This consists of stones for the foundation and wood for the framework. The latter is usually Pawkins or cedar wood. A circular trench is dug for the stone foundation and the framework of the church placed upon it. Finally the roof is thatched and the sides wattled and plastered. It would seem that several weeks would suffice for the completion of such a simple task but a considerable amount of time is spent in measuring and remeasuring and in admiring the handiwork as it progresses so that the actual time consumed is usually about a year and a half. When the church has been finished the Tabot is removed from its temporary resting place and taken into the new building with considerable ceremony. This is followed by a feast. The temporary fence around the inclosure is then removed and a stone wall substituted.

In addition to the church there are often other buildings in the churchyard and always quarters for the priests. Sometimes instead of a church gate there is a sort of hospitium where travellers can secure lodging for the night. Adjoining the church but not attached to it is a small hut or compartment in which there is an oven. This is called the Bethlehem. Here the deacon bakes the bread which is used in the Communion Service. Sometimes there is a bell tower in the churchyard which contains a room below used as a treasury. Some of the

larger churches such as the church of the Saviour of the World at Adua have the whole of the sacred inclosure within another inclosure. Such arrangements as at Adua seem to be in use only at monastic churches or at geddems. The first inclosure is used as a market and into it women may enter but the second inclosure is forbidden to commerce and females and forms the sanctuary i. e. geddem.

As already stated churches, especially those in the country, are always placed upon some prominent height and are easily identified at a distance by the grove of trees that surrounds them. Everywhere in Abyssinia one sees a pile of stones by the roadside where the church of the neighboring village first comes into sight. As each pious traveller passes he adds a stone to that pile. A similar custom is said to be observed in rural Greece where one will often find a heap of stones at that point where a church or a monastery is first sighted.

Though graven images are not allowed there is a considerable amount of painting in the churches. This art seems to be of a Byzantine or Syrian origin and has not changed since its introduction into the country and consequently a number of conventions are observed. Angels and martyrs are always depicted as white whereas those of an evil nature are painted in black or blue. Again, the good are painted with a full face, the evil with face in profile. Curious to relate the Abyssinians depict themselves as white, probably a vestige showing the origin of the art. Just as there is no spontaneity or freshness in Abyssinian literature so also there is no originality in their painting except that of anachronisms. Perspective there is none. Coloring is always vivid.

Practically all the inner walls of a church, including the outside of the Qedus Qedusan, are covered with

paintings. These are usually done on canvas and then glued to the walls. The scenes most popular with the artists are the Virgin and Child and St. George slaying the dragon.

Travellers have always been interested in as well as amused by this quaint art and have given us many accounts of it:

"The conceits of some of the most celebrated masters also afford a fund of amusement. Christ stilling the tempest is a subject fraught with perplexity to those who have never seen either a maritime vessel or the "great water", and firearms are placed somewhat before their invention in the hands of the heroes of antiquity. Our common father in the enjoyment of Paradise is at the present day invariably depicted with an emblazoned buckler, a spring of asparagus, and a silver sword; and his erring partner appears with a bushy beehive wig most elaborately buttered, and with silver earrings resembling piles of cannon shot". [5]

"One aspiring artist, weary perhaps of the antiquated cherubims and saints, the blazing flames and leafy bowers, which are the ordinary ornaments of the churches, had sought immortal fame by painting quite a new subject—The Migration of the Israelites. In his picture he represented them marching in soldier-like attitude over the heaving and surging waves of the Red Sea, clad in British uniforms with muskets and bayonets on their shoulders". [6]

One sacred subject struck Herbert Vivian as peculiarly grotesque: "Judas, en profile, dressed in green and lilac and a striped shirt, has just cut off the head of St.

[5] Harris *Highlands of Aethiopia*, London 1844, Vol. III. p. 184.

[6] Stern. *Wanderings Among the Falashas*, London 1862, p. 201.

Paintings in the Church at Bahardar Giyorgis.

John the Baptist, full face, and Herodias' daughter again en profile, dressed in green and red, is receiving the blood in a bowl". [7]

"The picture which struck me most showed the Virgin and Child crossing the Red Sea—probably during the flight to Egypt—in an Abyssinian rush-boat and feeding hippopotami with bread as they went. They are seated in the stern and are rowed by a Habash". [8]

Curious to relate, one of the first European travellers known to have been in Abyssinia was a Venetian painter, Francisco Brancaleone, who is mentioned by Alvarez as having travelled in Syria and in Egypt and as having worked for Zara Yaqob and his son and successor Baeda Maryam from about 1434. Brancaleone is said to have been a monk originally and to have lived in Abyssinia for forty years not being allowed to leave the country. He was an expert in liturgical matters and biblical history and displayed great skill in his scenes and characters. His pictures were painted upon hides and parchment and were hung on the walls of the churches and set up over altars. On one occasion he painted a picture of the Virgin and Child but created considerable dissension because the baby was upon the left arm instead of the right arm as the canons of Abyssinia art demanded. There is no doubt that the native artists copied Brancaleone's paintings and that his influence upon Abyssinian art was considerable. About fifty years later his nephew Nicola Brancaleone, also a painter, accompanied Pedro de Covilham who was sent on a mission to Prester John by the King of Portugal.

The paintings to be found in the Abyssinian churches

[7] Cf. also Vivian, *Abyssinia*, New York 1901, p. 175, 281.

[8] Hayes, *The Source of the Blue Nile*, London 1905, p. 120.

are not always confined to the products of the native artists. Major Harris had presented a portrait of Queen Victoria to the Negus, Sahela Selasse; which, upon the death of the latter was presented by his successor Khaylu Malakat to the Cathedral Church where "the people flock on all grand festivities to worship it as the representation of the Virgin Mary". [9] Describing the Qedus Qedusan in the Cathedral at Ankober, Major Harris relates, "In the holy of holies is deposited the sacred Tabot consecrated at Gondar by the delegate (the Abuna) of the Coptic Patriarch; and around the veil that fell before this mysterious emblem there hung in triumph four sporting pictures from the pencil of Alken, which had been presented to the king. They represented the great Leicestershire steeple-chase, and Dick Christian, with his head in a ditch, occupied by far the most prominent niche in the Cathedral of St. Michael". [10]

[9] Stern, *Wanderings Among the Falashas,* p. 201.

[10] Harris, *Highlands of Aethiopia.* Vol. II, p. 22.

CHAPTER IX

ORNAMENTS AND ACCESSORIES

Akman

The akman is a pair of embroidered cuffs, or in some cases armlets reaching to the elbows, which confine the sleeves of the alb. These ornaments are in general use throughout the Eastern Churches and are worn by bishops, priests, and deacons (?). In the Abyssinian Church their use seems to have been confined to the celebrant but at present they are said to be in disuse. (See qamis.)

Embilta

The embilta is a set of five or six pipes made from the "shamboko" a kind of hollow reed or bamboo. This instrument is blown like a Pan pipe "except that each performer blows one only, every pipe having a different note, depending on the length or thickness of the instrument. They are played in turns and produce a tune more or less resembling the chimes of village church bells" and according to travellers are not unpleasant to hear.

Banners

Banners are carried in processions and especially in the Epiphany procession. These are long and slender rods made from the light pith of the "juwarree" to the

top of which streaming pennants alternating in red and white[1] are attached. When the procession is over these banners are hung up in the churches as votive offerings.

Beganeh

"Here for the first time," says Bent, "we saw the Abyssinian lyre or harp, a specimen of which I coveted for six long weeks afterwards, until I was able to acquire one at Aksum. It is a delightful old-world instrument, exactly like the old Roman lyre; it has the testudo, or tortoise-shell, represented by a strong rounded piece of wood; it has the cornua, or horns, starting out of the testudo; it is played with plectra, two bits of polished horn. Alas! it is not a heptachord, but has eleven strings resting on a bridge on the opposite side to the tortoise; otherwise we should have a complete survival of the old Roman instrument. The Abyssinians call it the beganeh, and say it was invented by King David, and in the sacred pictures in their churches that monarch is always depicted as playing a facsimile of this instrument."

Bells

Bells are used for two purposes. There is a bell in the churchyard which summons the worshippers to the service. This is ordinarily a large slab of slate or wood suspended from a cross-rod which is supported by two poles. It is struck by a wooden club, and emits a sound similar to that of a cracked iron bell. These bells are said to be precisely the same in appearance as the semandra used in churches in remote parts of Greece. Littmann has called them phonoliths. Occasionally an iron

[1] Probably having the same symbolism as the colors of the shamma.

bell of European manufacture[2] is found and this is usually placed in a small bell tower near the church. A hand bell is used by a deacon during the Communion Service and in processions.

Zachel

The zachel is the paten, a vessel upon which the bread to be consecrated during the Communion Service is placed. In appearance it is something like a tray made of precious metal and about seven inches in diameter. Thus the paten used by the Abyssinian Church is similar to those used in other branches of the Catholic Church.

Zewae

The zewae is the chalice, the cup in which the wine is consecrated during the Communion Service. It is made of precious metal and is similar in appearance to those used in the other branches of the Catholic Church. In the Mass of the Catechumens, with a prayer over the cross-spoon intervening, two prayers are said over the chalice in order to hallow and to cleanse it.

Chera Masanko

"This is a sort of violin with a square sounding board, tightly made of skin, and played with a little bow". It is a favorite instrument with the "asmari" or wandering minstrels and is heard at every feast. This instrument is said to have been invented by Abraham

[2] As early as 1691 the Governor General of the Dutch Indies sent two metal bells as a present to King Adyam Sagad I which were placed in the Church of Debra Berhan.

and to have been played to the dying Virgin Mary. The chera masanko, like the beganeh, is depicted in church paintings.

Kabaro

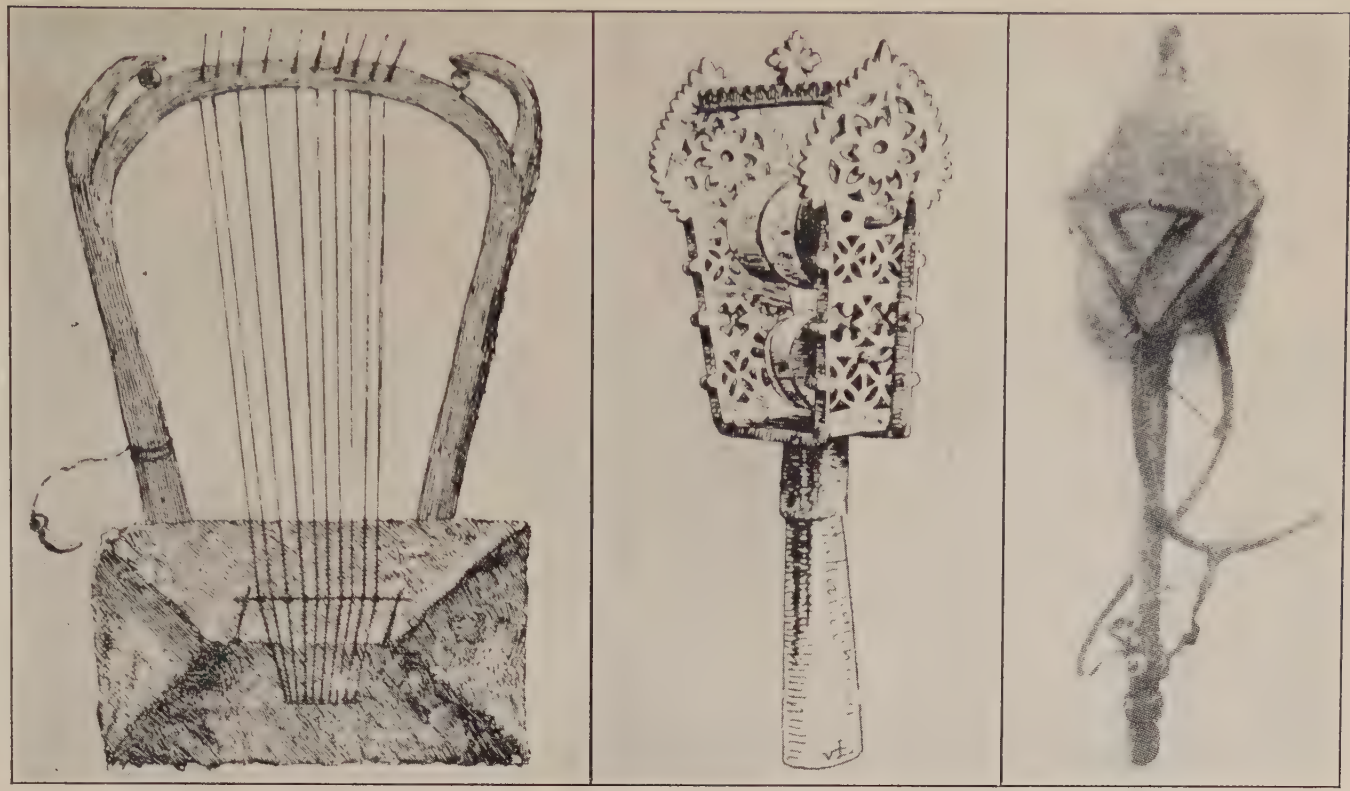
The kabaro is a small drum something like the Egyptian "darabuka" and with a few modifications is an instrument in general use throughout northeast Africa. In Abyssinia this drum is commonly used by the country people to beat the time for dancing and to serve as an accompaniment to songs. It is beaten with the hands and usually several are played together. "The cobero (kabaro) is suspended by a strap to the shoulder of the player, who, standing up, marks the time by swaying his body to and fro, while the spectators stand in a ring, taking it in turns to dance".

Cope

This is a flowing garment worn over the shamma, made of light materal, tied at the neck, and reaching down below the knees. Ordinarily this vestment is black in color but upon festive occasions a variety of colors is used.

Cross

The Abyssinian cross is the Greek cross with elaboration and is much used both for ornamental and practical purposes. Some travellers have spoken of crucifixes but the crucifix is unknown since graven images are not allowed. The sign of the cross is made upon numerous occasions.



Beganeh *Rattle* *Chera Masanko*

Crutch

The term crutch as well as the name praying stick have been used to designate an ecclesiastical ornament peculiar to the Abyssinian Church. The crutch is the symbol of priestly office. It is about five feet long and has a crosspiece at the top which gives it some resemblance to a crutch whence its name from travellers. The crosspiece is made out of ivory or brass and is often elaborately carved. The crutch is used in the dance before the Tabot and in all other sacerdotal dances.

Cundan Malakat

The cundan malakat is a reed instrument containing four long pipes, each with a bell mouth and a reed mouthpiece something like a clarinet. This like the embilta is played in turn but is always accompanied by a small drum. Unlike the embilta the tune is harsh and disagreeable.

Dibdikon

The dibdikon is a diptych, a list containing the names of the living and the dead who are to be commemorated in the Communion Service. The diptych is a small parchment roll about three or four feet long, three inches wide (in order that it can be easily held in the hand), and is written on both sides; containing prayers as well as the names of those to be commemorated. The roll is divided into sections or pages about two and one half inches wide by creasing the parchment. The outside usually contains a cross and often the whole is placed in a little cylindrical leather case.

Erfa Masqal

The erfa masqal (cross-spoon) is merely a spoon which is used during the administration of holy communion and like the spoon used in the Byzantine Church has a cross at the end of the handle, hence its name. The chalice is not given to the laity but the communion wafer is placed upon the cross-spoon, dipped into the consecrated wine, and then inserted in the mouth of the communicant. Persons of great importance, such as the Emperor and the governors, have the privilege of receiving the elements separately. In the Mass of the Catechumens, during the Prothesis, a prayer is said over the cross-spoon: "Place thine holy hand upon the cross-spoon, for the administration of the body and holy blood of thine only Son—bless now and hallow and cleanse this cross-spoon".

Eucharistic Bread

The Eucharistic bread is a round leavened loaf called "chebset" which is about four inches in diameter and three-fourths of an inch in thickness. Unleavened bread is used on Maundy Thursday. This Eucharistic loaf is stamped with a cross that is divided into nine squares; there is one square extending out from each side of the central square and in each angle of the cross there is an additional but smaller square. The central square of the cross is the "asba diyakon"[3] (corresponding to the priest's host) which is detached at the fraction and at the commixture placed into the chalice.

[3] Ethiopic transliteration from the Arabic. The general term used in the Eastern Churches is asbadikon.

Fly Whisk

The use of the fly whisk, like the crutch, is another exclusive sacerdotal prerogative. The whisk, attached to a carved handle, is made of horse hair which is often dyed red with henna. This article is seen everywhere in Abyssinia and is used by the priests when reading. The fly-flap is said to be identical in shape with those depicted on ancient Egyptian frescoes.

Font

There is no stationary font in the church but for the baptism of infants a large bowl or small tub seems to be used. Adults are baptized in a nearby stream.

Incense Bowl

There is an incense bowl for each censer. In addition most Christians seem to possess an incense bowl which they carry to funerals.

Qaba Lanqa

The qaba lanqa is the chasuble, an Eucharistic garment worn by the celebrant. This vestment however, has little resemblance to the chasuble used in the Western Church, being opened down the front and fastened only at the breast, in fact, it greatly resembles the cope used by the Western Church.

Qamis

The qamis is frequently confused with the akman even in Ethiopic manuscripts. It is the alb, a sleeved tunic of white linen reaching to the feet. "He (the cel-

ebrant) shall rise up with reverence before all the worshippers and with the deacon he shall unite and come to the Tabot, and take the vestment in his hand and turn his face towards the east, and he shall bow thrice and shall say Our Father who art in heaven. And then he shall turn towards the people and see whether there is a deacon to minister, before he puts on the complete vestments; for if there is no deacon to minister and to help him, the priest cannot unrobe himself after robing. And when the presbyter will robe himself, he shall see whether it is too long or too short; for after robing it is not allowed to put off again. And he shall put on the Akman (qamis) and he shall tie it up with the girdle (Zenar)."

Lights

Three candles are ordinarily used upon the Abyssinian altar, at the west angles and in the middle of the east side. As the Holy of Holies is dark and services are held before dawn lamps are also used. Candles are used in all the services: at the reading of the Gospel in the Communion Service, twelve at funerals, and one at the notification of excommunication.

Lintels

The lintels of the door of an Abyssinian church are an important object of reverence. These are often elaborately carved, sometimes the pattern suggesting those which are seen in old Byzantine churches. No devout Christian would think of passing these lintels without kissing them. In fact one does not speak of "going to church" but of "kissing the church".

Machfad

The machfad (pl. machfadat) is a linen cloth something like a purificator in which the host is wrapped during the Communion Service.

Maetant

The maetant is the censer, which is similar in appearance to those used in the other branches of the Catholic Church though generally smaller, and is often of elaborate design and workmanship. Bells are attached to the chains. The censer is much used in all the rites of the Church and frequently in processions.

Malakat

The malakat is a trumpet and in appearance is exactly like the ancient tuba. It is about a yard and a half long, made of wood covered tightly with skin, and ends in a gourd decorated with cowrie shells which forms the orifice of the trumpet. This instrument is used in religious processions and is carried before men of rank upon various occasions.

Mantolaet

The mantolaet is the curtain which conceals the interior of the Holy of Holies from the congregation during the Communion Service. It is hung before the principal entrance of the Qedus Qedusan. This veil is drawn aside by the priest at the beginning of the Communion Service, a prayer preceding and following the act.

Masob

The masob is not a paten as often supposed but rather a ciborium, a pot in which the Eucharistic bread is kept.

Mateb

The mateb is a silk cord which every Christian, including the clergy, wears around his neck; and is the badge which distinguishes him as a Christian. When an infant is baptized a red, white, and blue cord is placed around its neck by the priest; and on reaching puberty this is exchanged for a blue cord. The children of the better class wear small silver necklaces which are attached to the mateb. When a Christian dies, his mateb is buried with him.

Mitres

Various types of mitres are used by all orders of the clergy, both during the services and in processions. The mitre worn by the deacon is more like a helmet in shape and is often made of tin.

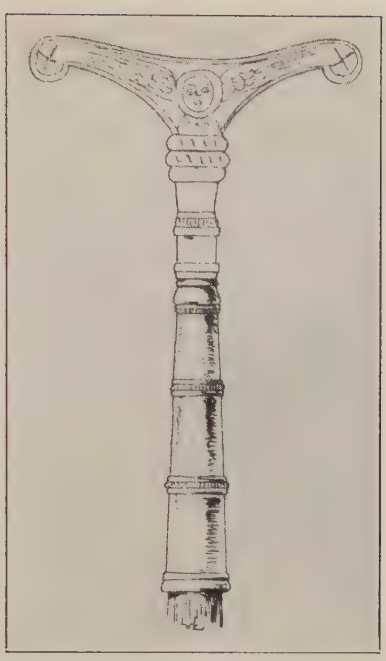
Motahet

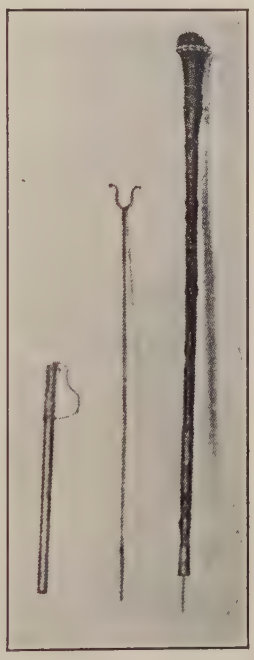
The motahet is a stole: "A narrow strip of embroidered silk, passed under the right arm with the ends thrown over the left shoulder and so hanging back and front".

Negarit

The negarit is a drum, cylindrical in shape, generally

A censer.
Note tongueless bells.





Top of a praying-stick, flute, and trumpet.
Note the cowries adorning the latter.

about nine inches in diameter and two feet long, but often much larger. The body of the drum is of wood and occasionally ornamented in silver. These instruments form a part of every church equipment and when not in use lie upon the floor of the Maqdas. In the Communion Service, during the dance of the priests, the drums keep time, being softly played with the palm of the hand. They are also used upon other religious occasions and always in the dances of the priests. The negarit like umbrellas, also serve as "insignia" of rank, the higher the rank, the greater the number of drums.

Rattles

The rattle is used by the priests in their dances and especially during the Communion Service. It is made of brass, neatly wrought, with a wooden handle. Three Turkish coppers are strung on to each of two wires across it, and it exactly corresponds to the ancient sistrum used in Rome, but more especially associated with Egypt, where it was used in the mystical music at the worship of Isis (Ovid, Met. IX 284). A legend ascribes its origin to an Abyssinian saint named Yared who upon hearing three birds sing in a tree was reminded of the Trinity and thus constructed the instrument. It is said that it takes seven years to learn to play these instruments.

Umbrellas

The umbrella is used in Abyssinia not as a sunshade but as a mark of distinction. It is not collapsible. These umbrellas are of a variety of colors: Cloth of gold is the special privilege of the Abuna and the Negus; great

men use red ones; white is reserved for ordinary officials; and the common people use a long stick with grass fastened at the end. Umbrellas form a part of the paraphernalia of every church. In funeral processions an orange umbrella is carried and at a church wedding the bridal couple receive the sacrament under a red umbrella. All of these umbrellas are fringed and are sometimes elaborately decorated with silver crosses, figures of saints, and other fantasies. Occasionally the fringe is edged with tongueless silver bells.

Wine

The wine used in the Communion Service must be freshly prepared by the deacon before each service. It is made from dried grapes and water.

Zenar

The zenar is a girdle or waistband, sometimes containing a clasp, which confines the alb (See qamis). It does not confine the stole.

CHAPTER X

THE ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR

The Abyssinian Calendar has been a subject of great complexity and difficulty. Only within the last few years has its study been placed upon a firm and scientific basis by the monumental work of Chaine.[1] This will necessitate a reconsideration of those dates in Abyssinian history which depend upon native sources for their determination.

The calendar of the Abyssinian Church, like Christianity, came from Egypt and as to method and dates agrees with the calendar used by the Coptic Church. These two calendars however, differ with regard to saints' days and the time of observing them.

The Abyssinian Calendar is regulated by the same astronomical solar laws that regulate the Julian Calendar. The year contains 365 days to which is added every fourth year an extra day. Each year in this four year period is sacred to one of the four Evangelists, who come in the following order: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The year of Luke is the Abyssinian leap year and is the year which precedes our leap year.

The year is divided into 12 months, each month containing 30 days. The extra five days are placed at the end of the year and are known as *Paguemen*. In leap

[1] This chapter is entirely indebted to Chaine, *La Chronologie des Temps Chrétiens de l'Egypte et de l'Ethiopie*. Paris, 1925.

year the extra day is added to these five days, making the Paguemen of this year a period of six days.

The names of the months are as follows:

Maskaram	September-October
Teqemt	October-November
Hedar	November-December
Tahsas	December-January
Ter	January-February
Yakatit	February-March
Magabit	March-April
Miyazya	April-May
Genbot	May-June
Sane	June-July
Hamle	July-August
Nahase	August-September
Paguemen	Part of September

As in the Julian and Gregorian Calendars days are grouped into weeks and are named in order. The Hasab designates the days of the week by numbers, but these numbers do not correspond to the order given by the names.

Days of the Week

	Ethiopic Name	Number in Hasab
Sunday	Ehud, Sanbata krestiyan	5
Monday	Sanuy	6
Tuesday	Salus	7
Wednesday	Rabue	1
Thursday	Hamus	2
Friday	Sadus, Arb	3
Saturday	Qadamit Sanbat	4

Thus it will be seen that the Abyssinian week begins on Wednesday. This is due to the fact that in Abyssinian chronology Christ was born on Wednesday in the year 5501, that is, 5501 years after the foundation of the world which according to the Abyssinians began in our year of 5493 B. C.

To determine the day of the week of a given date one of two things must be known: Either the day of the week of some other date in the same year, or the day of the week (Tentyon) on which the year begins.

The chronology of the Abyssinian Church follows the Era of the Incarnation, that is, dates from our Lord's birth; and although our own chronology also dates from our Lord's birth there is a different of seven or eight years between these two systems. In our system of chronology our Lord was born in the year of one, and if we accept the Abyssinian date 5493 B. C. as the foundation of the world then our Lord was born 5493 years after the creation of the world. Now the Abyssinians hold that our Lord was born 5501 years after the creation of the world and this gives us the seven or eight years difference between the Gregorian and Abyssinian chronologies.

The Abyssinian Church also uses several other systems of chronology. There is the Era of the World which dates from 5493 B. C., which, after our year of one, also differs from our chronology by seven or eight years. Then there is the system of chronology called the Years of the Mercy or the Years of the Grace, a system which follows the great lunar cycle. The term Years of the Grace has also been applied by European authors and even Abyssinian copyists to the Era of the World and the Era of the Incarnation, but incorrectly.

The concordance of the Julian Calendar with the

Abyssinian Calendar is uniform, but this is not the case with the Gregorian Calendar. The latter, since the changes made by Pope Gregory XII in 1582 has been modified three times and this has caused the Abyssinian New Year to be successively the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th of September. In order to synchronize the Abyssinian and Gregorian Calendars the period between October 15, 1582, and February 28, 2100, has been divided into four periods; the first period—October 15, 1582 to February 28, 1700—the first of Maskaram (New Year) for the years of Matthew, Mark, Luke began on September 8th of the Gregorian Calendar. The year of John began on the 9th of September. In the second period—March 1, 1700 to February 28, 1800—the first of Maskaram for the years of Matthew, Mark, and Luke began on the 9th of September. The year of John began on the 10th of September. In the third period—March 1, 1800 to February 28, 1900—the first of Maskaram for the years of Matthew, Mark and Luke began on the 10th of September. The year of John began on the 11th of September. In the fourth period—March 1, 1900 to February 28, 2100—the first of Maskaram for the years of Matthew, Mark and Luke begins on the 11th of September. The year of John begins on the 12th of September.

The concordance of the two calendars is further disarranged by the fact that their leap-years overlap. That is, the last eight months of Luke and the first eight months of our leap year correspond, but not exactly. The Gregorian dates for Luke are the same as those for Matthew and Mark up to Yakatit xxi in Luke or the 28th of February of our leap year. Then an extra day is added to our year, February 29th, and thus Yakatit xxii in Luke is February 29th instead of March 1st as in

Matthew and Mark. The balance however, is restored at the end of Luke and Paguemen vi is added. Paguemen vi is the 11th of September and this permits John to begin or rather compels John to begin on the 12th of September.

The fact that John begins on the 12th instead of the 11th of September as in Matthew, Mark and Luke would seem to disarrange the synchronization of John and the year following our leap year but the balance is restored because February 29th is dropped and so John ends on the 5th of Paguemen or the 10th of September which allows Matthew to begin on the 11th of September.

As already stated, the chronology of the Abyssinian Church is seven or eight years later than our chronology. To synchronize the years of the Abyssinan and the Gregorian Calendars, add seven years should the date be between September and December, add eight years should the date be between January and August. Vice versa, to find the Abyssinian date when the Gregorian date is known, subtract seven years should the date be between September and December, and subtract eight years should the date be between January and August.

To determine the laws and rules upon which the Abyssinian Calendar is based we have two sources: The different complications of the Haseb and the chronology which appears in the Ethiopic manuscripts. From these sources we learn that the dates of the Abyssinian eras mentioned above are determined by: (1) the Epact; (2) the Matq'e; (3) the Tentyon; and (4) the Evangelist.

Epact

Epact is the period which denotes the excess of the solar over the lunar year of twelve months, about eleven

days. The dates of the days in the Epact re-occur every nineteen years, hence the Epact runs in a cycle of nineteen years.

Matq'e

Matq'e is a sort of regular lunar cycle in narrow correlation with the Epact and serves to mark the date of the first new moon of the Abyssinian year. Thus, the first new moon of the Abyssinian year is also called the Matq'e. This moon is the new moon which falls six months before the Pascal New Moon. In the Jewish Calendar the sixth moon before Nisan is always Tishri and so Matq'e and Tishri correspond. Tishri is the "Feast of Trumpets" or the Jewish New Year. The trumpet, which was blown to usher in the new year, was called Matq'e—hence the name of the day. Matq'e is best translated "Feast of Trumpets". The date and day of the week upon which Matq'e occurs is of great importance for from it the dates of the movable feasts in the Abyssinian Calendar are determined.

Table of Epact and Matq'e

Golden Name[2]	Epact[3]	Matq'e
I	0	0
II	11	19 Maskaram[4]
III	22	8 Teqemt

[2] The Golden Name or Golden Numeral merely indicates the year of the lunar cycle.

[3] These numerals indicate the day of the lunar month which is composed of 30 days.

[4] These are the days of the Abyssinian year upon which Matq'e falls. Note in the chart that the numerals in the Epact column and in the Matq'e column when added always give 30 except in the Golden Name 1 when there is neither Epact nor Matq'e.

Golden Name [2]	Epact [3]	Matq'e
IV	3	27 Maskaram
V	14	16
VI	25	5 Teqemt
VII	5	25 Maskaram
VIII	17	13 Teqemt
IX	28	2
X	9	21 Maskaram
XI	20	10 Teqemt
XII	1	29 Maskaram
XIII	12	18
XIV	23	7 Teqemt
XV	4	26 Maskaram
XVI	15	15
XVII	26	4 Teqemt
XVIII	7	23 Maskaram
XIX	18	12 Teqemt

Tentyon

Tentyon, the starting point of the sun, is the day of the week on which the Abyssinian year commences. The position of the days of the first of the year (Tentyon) re-occurs periodically each 28 years. The Tentyon is also called the solar epact.

Table of Tentyon for the Solar Cycle

Solar Cycle	Evangelist	Tentyon [5]
I	Matthew	3 Friday
II	Mark	4 Saturday
III	Luke	5 Sunday

[5] The numerals indicate the numbers given in Haseb for the days of the Abyssinian week.

Solar Cycle	Evangelist	Tentyon
IV	John	7 Tuesday
V	Matthew	1 Wednesday
VI	Mark	2 Thursday
VII	Luke	3 Friday
VIII	John	5 Sunday
IX	Matthew	6 Monday
X	Mark	7 Tuesday
XI	Luke	1 Wednesday
XII	John	3 Friday
XIII	Matthew	4 Saturday
XIV	Mark	5 Sunday
XV	Luke	6 Monday
XVI	John	1 Wednesday
XVII	Matthew	2 Thursday
XVIII	Mark	3 Friday
XIX	Luke	4 Saturday
XX	John	6 Monday
XXI	Matthew	7 Tuesday
XXII	Mark	1 Wednesday
XXIII	Luke	2 Thursday
XXIV	John	4 Saturday
XXV	Matthew	5 Sunday
XXVI	Mark	6 Monday
XXVII	Luke	7 Tuesday
XXVIII	John	2 Thursday

The Evangelist

The Evangelist as already stated is the name given to each of the years in the four-year period. To find the name of the Evangelist for any given year, take the date of the year for which the Evangelist is to be found; the date of this year can be according to the Era of the

World, the Era of the Incarnation, and the Era of the Mercy. Divide the date of the year by four. If the remainder is 1, the name of the Evangelist for that year is Matthew; if 2, Mark; if 3, Luke; but if the division is even, the year is John.

Determination of the Dates of Movable Feasts

The movable feasts of the Abyssinian Calendar are those of Easter and the days which depend upon it. The reckoning of Easter is based upon a system devised by Ammonius, an Egyptian monk, a contemporary of Theophilus, the 22nd Patriarch of Alexandria (A.D. 385-412). Beginning his era on March 25, 5492 B.C., by early chronographers March 25th was held to be both the date of the Incarnation and of the Resurrection, he based his reckoning of Easter upon a 532 year period which contained 28 nineteen-year cycles of the moon. At the close of this period Easter would occur upon the same day and the Golden Number would revert to 1.

The dates of Easter and the feasts which depend upon it are determined by the Fast of Nineveh which precedes Lent, and in turn the date of the Fast of Nineveh depends upon Matq'e. That is to say, when the date of Nineveh has been found according to the principles given below, the date of Easter and the dates of the movable feasts can easily be calculated.

Suppose the date and day of the week of Matq'e have been found. Then the date of the Fast of Nineveh is calculated as follows: If Matq'e falls on Saturday, add 8 days, and this will be the date of Nineveh; if on Sunday, add 7 days; if on Monday, add 6 days; if on Tuesday, add 5 days; if on Wednesday, add 4 days; if on Thursday, add 3 days; if on Friday, add 2 days.

The date of the Fast of Nineveh having been found; add 14 days, and you have the beginning of Lent; add 11 days, the Festival of the Mount of Olives; add 2 days, Palm Sunday; add 9 days, Easter; add 3 days, the Congress of Priests; add 18 days, the Festival of Ascension; add 28 days, the Feast of Pentecost.

Lent always begins upon Monday and cannot come before the 1st of Yakatit nor after the 5th of Magabit. The Festival of the Mount of Olives always begins upon Sunday and cannot come before the 28th of Yakatit nor after the 2nd of Miyazya. Palm Sunday always begins upon Sunday and cannot come before the 19th of Magabit nor after the 23rd of Miyazya. Easter always begins on Sunday and cannot come before the 26th of Magabit nor after the 30th of Miyazya. The Congress of Priests always begins on Wednesday and cannot come before the 20th of Miyazya nor after the 24th of Genbot. The Festival of Ascension always begins on Thursday and cannot come before the 5th of Genbot nor after the 9th of Sane. The Feast of Pentecost always begins on Sunday and cannot come before the 15th of Genbot nor after the 19th of Sane.

The feasts which come each month during the year are: Trinity, the 7th of each month; Michael the Archangel, the 12th of each month; the Testament of the Mercy, the 16th of each month; the Holy Virgin, the 21st of each month; the Death of our Lord, the 27th of each month; and the Birth of Christ, the 29th of each month.

CHAPTER XI

FASTS

Ludolf has remarked that nowhere are fasts so strictly observed as in Abyssinia and that the Abyssinians would rather commit a crime than touch food on days of abstinence. Subsequent writers and travellers have confirmed this conclusion. Practically two thirds of the year are devoted to fasting. So many are the prescribed fasts, so frequent are the unprescribed fasts, and so closely do they precede and follow one another that no two writers have given us the same list.

Every Wednesday and Friday are days of abstinence. Incidentally these days are also set aside for acts of charity and the administration of justice. The reasons as to why these two days are observed as fast days are said to be that on the former day, the Saviour was rejected by the Jews and upon the latter day, their designs for His execution were accomplished. The other fast days of the year may be grouped around the following periods:

The Fast of Hodadi (Lent), for forty days before Easter.

The Fast of the Apostles, which comes during Trinity and varies from ten to forty days.

The Fast of the Holy Virgin, for sixteen days.

The fast in honor of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which occurs in August and lasts for fifteen days.

The Fast of Gahad, on Epiphany Eve.

The fast preceding Christmas, for forty days. This fast begins with Sebkat on the xv of Hedar and ends Christmas Eve with the Feast of Gena, and the xxviii of Tahsas.

The Fast of Nineveh, commemorates the preaching of Jonah; and comes on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of the third week before Lent. Some authors have called this the Fast of Jonah.

In addition to the seasons of abstinence prescribed by the Church, monks and nuns are commanded to observe additional fast days which are not required of the laity. Individual priests not only observe the regular fasts but also invent fasting days of their own. Often the father confessor as a penance for the penitent will order a fast day and in serious cases will not hesitate to order a month or a year of abstinence.

All persons above the age of thirteen observe the fasts commanded by the Church and hard labor does not exempt one from the rules. In fact it is maintained that the priests will not grant dispensations for any reasons whatsoever. The rigor and faithfulness with which the Abyssinian Christian keeps the fasts of his Church has always been a surprise and occasionally an annoyance to travellers, though a few of the latter, perhaps inconvenienced by such strict observance by their servants, have asserted that fasts can always be compounded by the payment of fixed sums of money. No doubt unscrupulous priests have been guilty of infractions but that it is the general rule is not substantiated by available evidence. The man who ignores or neglects any injunctions of the Church is looked upon almost as an infidel and in serious cases is excommunicated. Sepulchre in the churchyard is denied to anyone who dies in such a state of disobedience.

During a fast an Abyssinian does not eat or drink until late in the afternoon. The time for ceasing is determined by the length of a man's shadow and this period varies with the different fasts. Whether the length of the shadow has anything to do with the relative importance of these different periods of fasting cannot be said. The chief articles of diet during a fast are bread and a pepper sauce called "chiro". Meat, eggs, butter and milk are prohibited, and in order that the law is not transgressed by the adherence of particles of the interdicted food, everyone as a measure of precaution thoroughly cleans and polishes all culinary utensils.

Lent

The forty days preceding Easter are ushered in by the Feast of Epiphany and closed by the Easter feast. This period is known as the "Toma Hodadi" or simply "Hodadi" and is observed with greater rigor than any other fast, in fact, it is practically a test of one's Christianity; for the inconsiderate individual who fails to keep it is almost considered a pagan. Hodadi corresponds to our Lent and like it is observed in commemoration of our Lord's forty days of abstinence. Special virtues are attached to this season of fasting and properly observed it is popularly believed to nullify the sins committed during the rest of the year. Even within this long fast there is the special period of Holy Week which has the following restrictions: All work and travel is strictly prohibited during these seven days and from Thursday afternoon until Easter morn no morsel of food or a drop of water must enter the mouth. These three days are known as "Kenona" and on them the priests neither eat nor drink but remain in the churches singing and

praying incessantly. One concession however, is made to the people during Hodadi. They are permitted to eat in the morning on Saturdays and Sundays but animal food is not allowed. The long fast is broken at the first crow of the cock on Easter morn and the hilarious Easter feast begins.

Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday is passed entirely out of doors, and none, unless hindered by illness, remains in the house on that day. When the fast is broken late in the afternoon no one eats ordinary bread but a mixture out of special flour is compounded and boiled. All of this is done out of doors. They take a quantity of Indian corn, millet, dried peas—in fact a little of any kind of grain they might possess—and mixing the whole in a wooden mortar called "fandouk", pound it until the husks drop off. This dough is then cooked in an earthen pot.

Good Friday

On Good Friday morning the little boys and girls, those who are under thirteen and are thus exempted from fasting, go round the neighborhood and knocking at the door of each house demand food, calling out, "Mishamisho, mishamisho! May God give ye cattle in your yard, and children to your bosom; and may those you have already grow up in health and strength". Though everyone appealed to for food gives something it is a part of the game that the children be as grasping and impertinent as possible. This attitude of the children is partly due to custom and partly for the sake of amusing themselves at the expense of the giver. Thus no

matter how much or what one gives the children are never satisfied, continually asking for something else until the subject of their banter becomes vexed and drives them away. After the rounds have been made and all the food possible has been collected they retire to some secluded spot and eat it. But woe to that man who ignores the children's prerogatives on that privileged day and refuses to give them anything. In retaliation for such stinginess the children hold a mock funeral. A sham corpse representing the subject of the irony, made out of a bundle of clothes and placed upon the funeral couch is carried in procession through the town. Some of the boys are dressed as priests and the rest of the group act as mourners. As the cortege moves along the children wail and cry out that so and so is dead—such a generous man—how honorable, and anything else derogatory that comes into their minds. After the effigy has been sufficiently submitted to public gaze the burial is held in the market-place. Needless to say the adults thoroughly enjoy the episode and especially if the object of the occasion happens to be known in the community as a character such as the children have derided.

Fast of the Holy Virgin

The Fast of the Holy Virgin which lasts for sixteen days is in a sense more strictly kept than Lent for even the children under thirteen years, who are ordinarily exempted from fasting, are not excluded from observing the rules of this period.

CHAPTER XII

Feasts

The harshness of Abyssinian fasts is broken somewhat by feasts. There are feasts in honor of the conception, nativity, circumcision, the return of our Lord as well as feasts in honor of the Virgin Mary and other saints. As explained elsewhere, the festivals of Trinity, St. Michael, the Testament of the Mercy, the Holy Virgin, the Birth of our Lord are celebrated every month upon their respective days. Due to the complexities of the Abyssinian Calendar and the inability of most of the population to read, in some parts of Tigre it is customary for the priests to ring the phonoliths on the evening preceding the festival. Some of the principal feasts will be described below but they vary somewhat as to details and elaborateness in the various parts of the country.

New Year's Day

New Year's Day, the first of Maskaram, the beginning of the Abyssinian year, falls on the 11th of September in our calendar except in the year which follows our leap year, called the year of St. John in the Abyssinian Calendar, and then it falls on the 12th of September. This occasion is a general holiday on which much feasting takes place. On this day it is usual to address good wishes to one's friends.

Saint John's Day

This day occurs on the same day as New Year's Day and in Abyssinia is regarded much in the same way as our New Year's Day. Early in the morning it is customary to present a bunch of wild flowers, saying "Inkoutatash" (take this present), a word which is not used upon any other occasion. This feast comes at the beginning of the Abyssinian season and the nosegay presented on that day is a sort of offering of the first fruits. A gift is bestowed in return for the present. Everyone tries to be the first to arise and the first to offer his bouquet. Presents are exchanged among equals, inferiors bestow presents upon their superiors, and husbands and wives exchange gifts. Sometimes this festival is styled "enkotatach", a name that is derived from the present of a green fillet of wiry grass which is bound upon the head. The day is celebrated with festivity and merry-making. On this day also the whole population goes down to a neighboring stream in the evening in order to bathe.

Another peculiar custom is observed. St. John's Day is a special occasion for exorcising those possessed of the devil. After all other methods have failed, the friends of the possessed patiently await the arrival of St. John's Day, when they take the afflicted person out into the country where cross-roads meet. Here, a white or red sheep, having been dragged around the possessed person three times, is slaughtered "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost". The sign of the cross is made upon the patient's forehead with the victim's blood and then all return home. The sheep is left where it was killed. No one looks back because it might disturb the devil who is supposed to have left the man and to be busily devouring the slaughtered animal.

Several ceremonies peculiar to Tigre are celebrated on St. John's Day. Preceding the festival there are five or six epagomenal days upon which the natives will not depart from home, drive their cattle about, make the cattle urinate into a vessel (urine is used in tanning), churn their milk (i. e. they drink it sweet); nor will they during these days look on their fields lest they be scorched by the sun and the crops be lost. When this period has passed the cows are purified with holy water and the first milk is given to the priests.

Masqal

Masqal, or the Feast of the Cross, occurs at the end of September and commemorates the discovery of the true cross by St. Helena. Between St. John's Day and this day a sort of desultory warfare, which is accompanied with much buffoonery and persiflage, is carried on between the young people of the opposite sex.

The evening before Masqal is practically the St. John's Eve of Europe. At sunset fire-arms are discharged by those who possess them and bonfires are kindled. Legend relates that when the mother of Constantine discovered the true cross she caused bonfires to be lighted upon the hills of Palestine and that these were seen by the people in Constantinople. While the visibility of their modern descendants in Abyssinia is not so great they can be seen for miles around. Later everyone takes a lighted torch from the bonfire and parades through the town poking them everywhere, into the corners of the houses and stables, as if looking for something that has been lost and exclaiming, "Akho, akholky" or "turn out the spinach, and bring in the porridge"; Masqal is come."

The meaning of the first two words is not clear [1] but they have been translated to mean, "Awake from idleness (or darkness)." The evening ends in a general frolic. In Shoa it is customary to take the ashes from the Masqal fire and to make the sign of the cross upon the forehead. These black crosses are prophylactic against the devil. While scrambling to obtain these ashes blows are lustily deal upon each other by the competitors and often some of them are pushed into the fire during the scuffle.

On the eve of the festival musicians go about and appear before every house playing their flutes and singing the praises of the master and his family. Next morning a loaf of bread is given to each musician. Several other ceremonies are observed upon the same evening. Each male member of a family just after sunset takes three sticks of euphorbia wood and having lighted them goes out into the fields and casts them down one after the other. The boys perhaps in imitation of their elders play a game in which lighted sticks are used. Early next morning everyone goes down to a neighbouring stream to bathe and this is called the "water of the festival". In some towns an inter-parochial fight takes place on Masqal Eve, which reminded Parkyns of a Cambridge "town and gown" row of the last century. Clubs were used by the participants but serious injury seldom occurred. In Tigre, on the Festival of the Cross the boys play the same game with lighted sticks as they played on St. John's Eve.

Early Masqal morning before dawn important men have large piles of wood erected upon eminences near the town and here oxen and sheep, having been led around the fire three times, are slaughtered "in the name of the

[1] Possibly of ancient and pagan origin and the meaning now lost.

Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost". The flesh is left on the spot to be consumed by the wild animals. The ceremony is probably the survival of some sort of scapegoat rite. Everyone arrives early in order to see these fires. The followers of chieftains present themselves at the home of their master and enact the "dumfater", or war boast, in which they relate how they have served him during the past and are willing to do so again when the opportunity arrives. Each follower is then rewarded. This same ceremony takes place at court but on a much grander scale and with a difference in regard to the rewards. The chieftains who appear before their ruler bring presents instead of receiving them. Every family that can afford it slaughters an animal upon this day and holds a feast.

Of particular interest on Masqal is the "Gebbur" held at court. The "Gebbur" with its attendant ceremonies as held in Addis-Abebba at present is substantially the same as that witnessed and described by Harris at the court of Sahela Sellase early in the last century. The "Gebbur" is simply a great feast given at court to thousands of retainers in which the principal article of diet is raw beef called "Broundo".

"To the sound of bugles and trumpets the main doors were opened and in poured the chiefs with their soldiery, who had come up to Addis-Abebba for the feast from all over the country; the organization was admirable, and though some 5000 men filled the hall there was no sort of scrambling or disorder whatever. They set to work at once on the hors-d'œuvres, and then the pieces de resistance arrived. Hundreds of pairs of men came in, each pair carrying between them a long stout pole, from which hung huge pieces of red raw meat, covered with strips of red and gold cloth. These men stood closely to-

gether all along the tables and one on each side, so that the meat hung down from the poles over the tables just in front of the diners. The guests produced knives, and feeling the joint with their fingers to pick out a tender bit, rapidly sliced off strips of meat, which they put into their mouths, cutting off what would not go in quite close

A gebbur or banquet of raw meat
at which there were some five thousand guests of the Emperor.

to their lips, an operation which, from personal experience, I know demands great skill if one's nose is not to suffer—as the cut is always made upwards. After ample libations of tej and araki (native mead, or hydromel and spirit) the diners filed out in perfect order, and the stage was cleared for the next party. The whole function had lasted nearly four hours." [2]

[2] Charles F. Rey, *Unconquered Abyssinia*. London 1923, p. 64.

Christmas Day

Liddet, or Christmas Day, preceded by a fast, is not marked by any unusual ceremonies other than the usual feasting and dancing.

Epiphany

Epiphany or Timkat i. e. baptism, is one of the great feast days of the Abyssinian Church. This festival aroused the anger of the Portuguese because of its promiscuous bathing which seemed indecent. It is not a rite of re-baptism but rather a renewal of the baptismal vows. A number of accounts of this celebration have been given to us by travellers, which vary considerably in detail, but agree in essentials.

The day before Epiphany is passed in abstinence by the priests and devout men until sunset. Sometime during the afternoon the priests receive communion in their church and then forming a procession proceed to a nearby stream. This procession is often a gorgeous affair, containing brilliantly colored umbrellas, the chief priest with the Tabot upon his head carefully concealed from the vulgar gaze, priests with rattle in one hand and a crutch in the other, and deacons with mitres. One or more tents have been previously erected on the bank of the stream and a large amount and variety of food has been brought by the pious laity in anticipation of the banquet that follows the sunset. When the procession reaches the stream the Tabot is placed in a tent specially reserved for it and here it remains during the night. With the setting of the sun feasting begins. The whole night is often spent in feasting, singing, dancing, and praying. The dances and songs are of a religious nature. The dance is a peculiar shrugging of the shoulders and

stamping of the feet. About sunrise the sacrament is administered to the priests and the stream is blessed by the chief priest. The Tabot is carried to the water, sprinkled with a few drops and replaced in its tent. After the blessing of the stream the people bathe in it. Priests and men of importance are merely sprinkled with water.

This ends the ceremony. Then either here or in some convenient place dances and games are held. Sometimes the women dance. Their dance is similar to one seen in Egypt and the Sudan, the chief feature of which is the protruding of the chest and chin alternately, and the more forcibly this is done the more skillful and graceful are the dances. The men engage in various sports. Those who are mounted engage in the game of "goux" which is a sort of tournament in which the warriors enact a mimic fight, pursuing and retreating, giving and warding off blows. The pedestrians, divided according to parishes, engage in hockey which is played exactly as it is elsewhere; with clubs having a large head and with a wooden ball. Sometimes the goals are a considerable distance apart, being two designated parishes. Victory consists in driving the ball past one of the goals and is celebrated with a dance.

When the sports have terminated, usually about noon, each parish forms a procession of its own and following its respective Tabot and priests returns home. The recessional like the processional is often very elaborate and is disbanded upon reaching the church. Then the people spend the remainder of the day in feasting.

St. Michael the Archangel

The day following Epiphany is observed both as a commemoration of the marriage in Cana of Galilee and in honor of St. Michael the Archangel. By many Abys-

Procession in the court of Zion-Church in Aksum.

sinians this day is regarded as one of their greatest festivals. On this day there are special services in the churches and feasting in the homes. The Feast of St. Michael the Archangel is observed upon the twelfth of each month, though the occasion noted in the preceding paragraph is the greatest of these twelve festivals. During summer and autumn celebrations of the Feast of St. Michael there are several customs peculiar to Tigre. A cake of leavened dough is made in the evening and placed in a vessel, covered with leaves, upon which charcoal is placed. Early in the morning a "thick loaf of the leaves" is made of the leaven for each male, who taking the bread, touches his two elbows, holds it against his forehead, kisses it, breaks it over his right knee and eats it. The leaves are called "maravit".

Nativity of the Holy Virgin

The anniversary of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin occurs several days after the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel. A special feature of this celebration is the gathering of priests in those churches which are dedicated to the Virgin. The event is observed in the manner of other feasts, with prayer and feasting.

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday in Tigre, as in other countries, is observed by the use of palms. Upon this day everyone ties a piece of palm around his wrist.

Easter

Easter is perhaps the greatest day in the Abyssinian Calendar in that it breaks the long and severe Lenten fast.

As upon several other occasions during the year, presents are exchanged. The day is celebrated with the usual feasting and merry-making.

The following customs from Tigre may be noted: On the eve of the festival, girls, divided into two parties, beating drums and clapping their hands, sing as follows:

First party: "It has come, it has come, our Easter has come".

Second party: (the same).

First party: "It has come, it has come, our Resurrection has come."

Second party: (the same).

First party: "And who has brought a beautiful maiden?"

Second party: "Hosanna, medriso." (The meaning of the last word is unknown, but comes from a root meaning "to sing").

First party: "And while they resemble the holy shrine."

Second party: "They do not eat, nor do they drink."

First party: "Ahoye, say, fellow".

Second party: "Silk and of dignified countenance.

First party: "Ahoye, I am 'ido'." (The last word is the name of the young girls during the Easter Festival.)" [3]

This game is repeated daily for a week.

Two other customs are observed upon the same evening. Candles having been prepared for the occasion, everyone rises about midnight; thereupon each man seizes one of the candles and having lighted it goes outside where all remain until the candles are consumated. When the candles have burned out the men say: "O Lord, have mercy upon us, Christ!" Then they pray for a blessing:

[3] E. Littmann, *Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia.* Leyden 1910, Vol. II. Section 150, pp. 243-246.

"Oh God, make it to be a festival of our good fortune and of our well-being! Let us have another threshing-floor and another year, if thou wilt! Mayest thou come and may we stay! Early the next morning they bathe the whole body and this is called "the water of the festival". The rest of the day is spent in feasting upon goats' flesh and in drinking beer. On the eve of Easter as on St. John's eve, musicians go about and appear before every house playing their flutes and singing the praises of the master and his family. Next morning a loaf of bread is given to each musician.

Rahab

The Feast of Rahab comes in the midst of Pentecost, i. e. the mid-interval between Easter and Trinity. On this day synods are held by the bishops in order to adjust and to settle doctrinal difficulties or ecclesiastical disputes.

Gaber Manfas Kedus

Gaber Manfas Kedus, i. e. "Slave of the Holy Ghost" is one of the greatest Abyssinian saints. On his anniversary everyone eats vetch peas which have been forced to sprout by soaking them for three or four days in water. Portions of these peas are sent around among friends and neighbors as gifts.

Transfiguration

The Festival of the Transfiguration is observed in the evening with much illumination. Boys carrying flambeaux wander through the streets singing and every dwelling displays some sort of light.

Kadam Suaur or Left Saturday

Though the Christian Church gave up the observance of the Sabbath, in Abyssinia it is commemorated in a special festival called Kadam Suaur, or Left Saturday, i. e. because its observance was left off. Upon this day the priests of the parish collect a quantity of rushes and take them to church where they are blessed. They are taken out into the parish, a deacon carrying the bundle, and distributed to all whom they meet, and bound upon the heads of those who receive them. Following the distribution of the rushes the clergy visit the houses in their parishes and receive presents.

Individual and family Saints' Days

A Christian often makes a vow to his patron saint that he will slaughter a sheep or a bullock, or present some other votive offering upon the anniversary of his festival. This is done in order to receive the saint's protection and favor during the ensuing year. Just as every Christian has a patron saint so also each family has its patron saint whose anniversary is handed down and commemorated from father to son. When the anniversary of the patron saint arrives each family endeavors to entertain its friends by some sort of merry-making according to its means. Even servants feel obliged to commemorate the patron saint of their particular family and hence hold feasts among themselves. The patron saints most in vogue are St. Michael, the Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist, Takla Haymanot and Gaber Manfas Kedus.

CHAPTER XIII

Baptism and Confirmation

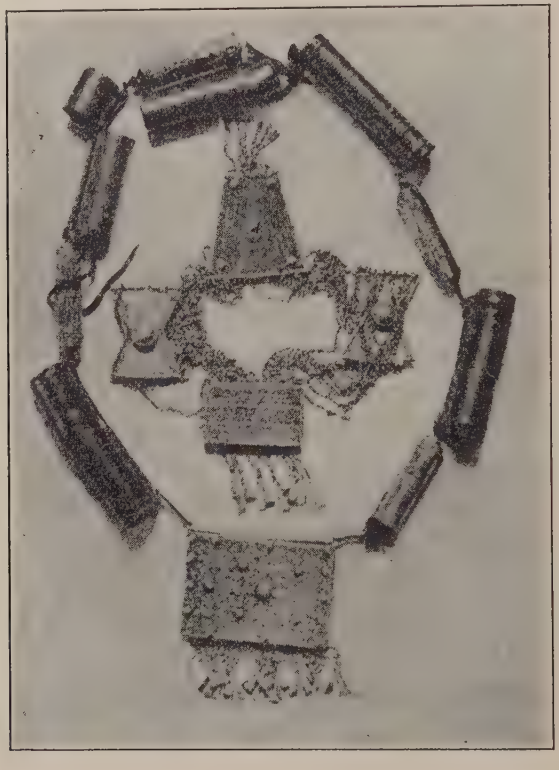
As the day of birth approaches several female friends of the confined woman come in both to watch over her day and night and to be ready to assist when the critical moment arrives. Men are not allowed to be present during the delivery. This exclusion of males is not due so much to modesty—Parkyns was allowed to be present upon one occasion—as to superstition; for from the moment of birth the room and everything in it is held to be unclean until properly purified by the priests of the parish; and should a man enter the room during this period he would be considered unclean and would be refused admittance to the church for forty days.

Seated upon two stones slightly separated and with her feet propped against a chair or table the woman is delivered in an almost upright position. One female friend holds the mother's shoulders and continually implores the aid of the Virgin Mary while another woman holds the feet. The others assist in the delivery as soon as the shoulders of the child appear.

The infant is first placed into a flat wicker basket filled with flour and then washed and perfumed. One of the women, in order to make the child handsome, moulds its head and features by pressing them with her fingers. When this task is completed the woman takes the child, should it be a boy, over to the window; and one of the men, in order to make the child courageous, cautiously

approaches and pokes his spear through the window into the infant's mouth. On this occasion also a small boy offers a sacrifice by cutting the throat of a fowl before the child.

These ceremonies completed the women announce the



Charm cases containing charms written on parchment. In the middle, a silver necklace.

sex of the child by uttering a cry of exultation, repeated twelve times, if the infant is a male, and three times if a female. No sooner have these cries ceased than the women rush out of the house, and should they succeed

in capturing any of the men he must pay for his release by promising them some present. Upon this occasion also it is customary for the visitors to offer congratulations to the father, such as, "May your son (or daughter) be a joy to you!" or "May God render you joyful!"

Three days after the birth the attendant women carry the mother's clothes to the brook to be washed. While going to or returning from the brook the women have the same privilege that was accorded to them upon the natal day, that of capturing any male that they might chance to meet and to demand a present from him in exchange for his release. The rest of the day is then spent in merry-making. All the women eat porridge and partake of the flour which was specially prepared by the mother previous to her delivery. Porridge has also been the diet of the mother since the birth of the child. Until the mother can take the child herself it is suckled by any woman who happens to have milk. In addition to milk, butter and sometimes even honey is crammed into the infant's mouth.

Eight days after birth the child, should it be a boy, is circumcised; should it be a girl, a slight operation of clitoridectomy is performed. Ten days after birth the parish priests come and purify the house by censing and sprinkling it with holy water.

As soon as the child is born the priest makes the proper calculation as to when the child is to be baptized and notifies the father. In case of a boy, baptism takes place forty days after birth; with a girl, eighty days after birth. Tradition assigns the length of these periods to Adam and Eve, the former receiving the Holy Spirit forty days and the latter eighty days after creation.[1] Should the

[1] Bishop Gobat suggested that this custom was more likely to be of Hebrew origin. Cf. Lev. 12, 1-8.

child be in danger of dying baptism may be administered at any time. The Abyssinians are said to be very particular in requiring the child to be baptized upon the proper day and should the father fail to be present with the child at the church upon the appointed day a penance will be imposed upon him by the priest. Should the priest be incorrect in his calculation he must impose upon himself the same penance that he would have given to the father.

Upon the appointed day the father, mother and child, together with their friends arrive at the church. The rite of baptism is exceedingly long and contains much repetition. Only a skeleton outline will be given below, but it must be remembered that the acts here mentioned are interspersed with long prayers, and selections from the Bible and psalms.

At the beginning of the service, the mother, who has not been allowed in church for forty days, is churched. The infant is also purified and blessed. Taking the child from the godfather, or from the godmother if the child is a female, the priest asks for the name [2] and at the same time says several prayers. Then the priest proceeds to consecrate the oil, holding the vessel containing it in his left hand and a cross in his right hand. Before anointing the child the priest blows into its face in order that the demons abiding in the infant because of Adam's sin may be driven out.

[2] In order that evil spirits may not know the real name of the child and thus have power over it, often a ficticious name is given, or else the name is changed later. Sometimes in later life people change their names during some crisis or special event.

The child is anointed thirty-seven times [3]: twice upon the face, twice upon the nose, once upon the right eye, once upon the left eye, once upon the mouth, once upon the right ear, once upon the left ear, once upon the breast. Here the anointing is brought to a slight pause by making the sign of the cross upon the child from the top of the head to the loins. Then the anointing continues: once upon the navel, once upon each hand, once on the back, once under the shoulder blades in front, once upon the arms, once on the back, once on the shoulder, once on the neck, once on the right hand, once on the back, once under the shoulder, once on the arms, once on the back, once on the shoulders, once upon the back of the hand, twice upon the palms of the hand, twice upon the thighs, twice upon the knees, twice upon the toes.

The above anointing is not done with the holy chrism but merely with blessed oil. The holy chrism is not used until confirmation.

Several prayers follow and, at the beginning of each prayer, the child's knees are bent. The child is undressed and some one holds up his right hand and turns his face to the east and renounces the devil. Again the child is anointed: upon the head, over the heart, upon both sides of the hands and upon the knees and all members with the sign of the cross. The priest now approaches the font and blesses the water by blowing into it in the form of a cross. Following this the holy chrism is immersed into the font three times in the form of the cross.

[3] See *Le Rituel Ethiopien* (*Rituel du Baptême*)—Ethiopic text and Latin translation—by M. Chaine, Rome 1913. It is interesting to note that the baptismal-confirmation rite of the Abyssinian Church was the first part of any Eastern ritual to be printed in Europe This was edited by Tasfa Seyon, a monk of the monastery of "San Stefano dei Mori" at Rome, in 1549.

The deacon bows the head of the infant to the west, east, south and north and then the priest baptizes the child by immersing it three times—"I baptize you (name) in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen." Should the infant be ill, affusion is used in place of immersion.

Baptismal Font, in Aksum.
Note the Ge'ez inscription.

This may be said to be the end of the baptismal rite. Confirmation [4] follows immediately.

First the priest blesses the Holy Chrism and with it anoints the eye-lids, eyes, nose, lips, ears, the backs and

[4] M. Chaine, *Le Rituel Ethiopien* (*Rituel de la confirmation et du mariage*), pp. 3-7, Rome 1913.

the palms of the hands, the breast, the knees, the soles of the feet, the shoulders and the upper part of the breast. Then the infant is dressed in a white garment and the priest having blessed the crown, places it upon the child's head. The priest now places his hand upon the infant and bestows the Holy Ghost.

The ceremony is concluded by the infant receiving Holy Communion during which the consecrated elements are placed into its mouth. The child will now continue to receive Holy Communion until about the age of thirteen but after that age adults rarely partake of the Holy Communion until late in life. It is said that only priests, monks, the aged and children ever partake of Holy Communion.

At the conclusion of the service the priest ties around the infant's neck a plaited cord of red, blue and white silk. This is the "mateb", the badge of Christianity which every Christian wears. Later, when the infant has attained manhood or womanhood, this cord is exchanged for a blue one.

The godparents are exhorted to look after the child, but they neglect their duties as elsewhere—with this difference; should a godfather die without issue his godson is regarded as his legal heir.

The church service ended the baptismal party, including the priest, returns to the father's home where a great feast is held in honor of the occasion.

Adult baptism is rare in the Abyssinian Church and may be said to be administered only to converts. The same service is used for the adults as is used for infants except the adult makes his own responses and performs the necessary acts. Adults are also immersed three times. Women perform the act of immersing for women, though they do not officiate at the service. A nearby stream or pond serves as a font for adults.

CHAPTER XIV

The Communion Service [1]

The Communion Service is celebrated daily at dawn and upon special occasions in the evening. In addition to the celebrant the presence of seven deacons and a number of dabtera is required. With the exception of the clergy, young children and the aged, the laity seldom receives the sacrament, though many attend. Almost invariably a number of people remain without the church during the service. Some of these are merely loungers; others are excommunicated, or are unclean, and are not allowed to enter the church.

In addition to the Qeddase, or the Communion Service, a number of other liturgical books are used. Most important among these is the Sherata Gezawe, i. e. "the Lectionary", which contains the lessons read during the service. [2] Then there are the Seneksar that contains the

[1] There are services of morning and evening prayer but details concerning them are lacking. Morning Prayer comes sometime after the early Communion Service, and Evening Prayer is held at vespers. These services seemed to be attended largely if not entirely by the clergy; the laity being present at the Communion Service only. A lectionary is used, containing the eight lessons for Morning Prayer and two lessons for Evening Prayer. These lessons are taken from the Psalter and the Gospels.

Though all Abyssinians go barefooted yet a Church law requires that no one can enter the church without first removing his shoes. There are no seats in the Abyssinian church; the people kneel or squat upon the floor. Persons of importance however use a sort of camp stool which their servants carry to and from the church. The congregation stands for prayer.

[2] Manuscripts of the New Testament seem to be adapted to the lection system as they are commonly divided into three volumes containing the Gospels, the Pauline Epistles—and the Catholic Epistles, Acts, and the Apocalypse.

lives of the saints which are read upon their respective days; the Nagara Maryam (History of Mary), a collection of stories which is arranged for the twelve months of the year—and also collections of homilies which are read upon the monthly festivals of the Virgin and Michael the Archangel, and upon the festivals of Gabriel and Raphael; and a collection of lessons and homolies, the Gebra Hemanat (Acts of the Passion), which are read during Holy Week.

The musical instruments used in the divine service have been described elsewhere. Little is known concerning the music of the Abyssinian Church. Some travellers have been amused or indignant upon hearing the musical instruments and chanting during their services. Yared is the reputed founder of church music and to him the three modes in general use are ascribed: Ge'ez, used for feriae; Ezel, used on fast days and during Lent; and Araray, used for the principal feasts. The general name given to church music seems to be "Deggua".

The Abyssinian Church is well supplied with hymns and canticles. The "Organ of Praises" or "Organ of the Virgin" is a collection of hymns arranged for the different days of the week, containing praises in honor of the Virgin. A collection similar to this is the "Psalter of Christ", containing praises in honor of Christ. Hymns and chants for the festivals of the year are contained in the "Mawaset" (Answers), the "Antiphonary" of the Church; and in the "Meraf".

A number of different kinds of hymns (Qene) are in use: "Malkea", chanted on the festivals of saints, in which the various parts of the body are mentioned; "Salam" — to be found especially in the *Seneksar* — a short rhymed poem sung in honor of a saint; "Mahbara Memanam", occasionally recited during the *Qeddasc* at the

moment of *Communion;* and "Tabiba", confined to the monks.

Versification does not consist of a fixed number of syllables but in tempo—long verses are sung faster than short ones, and a pause divides verse from verse. Thus hymns are classified according to their various lengths, as follows:

1. Gebae Qana — two verses.
2. Amlakiya — three verses.
3. Mibazkhu — three verses.
4. Wazema — five verses.
5. Sellase — six verses.
6. Zayeze — five verses.
7. Mawades — eight verses.
   (a) Mawades Zaqelikmu — nine verses.
   (b) Aker Qelikmu — two verses.
8. Aker Wazema — two verses.
9. Keber Yeti — two verses.
10. Etana Magor.
    (a) Heneseha — two verses.
    (b) In Ge'ez mode — seven verses.
    (c) In Ezel mode — eleven verses.

Unfortunately travellers and even the members of scientific expeditions have failed to give us a complete or accurate account of the celebration of a Communion Service, but from the few details that they have given us and a perusal of the Qeddase the main outline and accompanying actions of the service are clear.

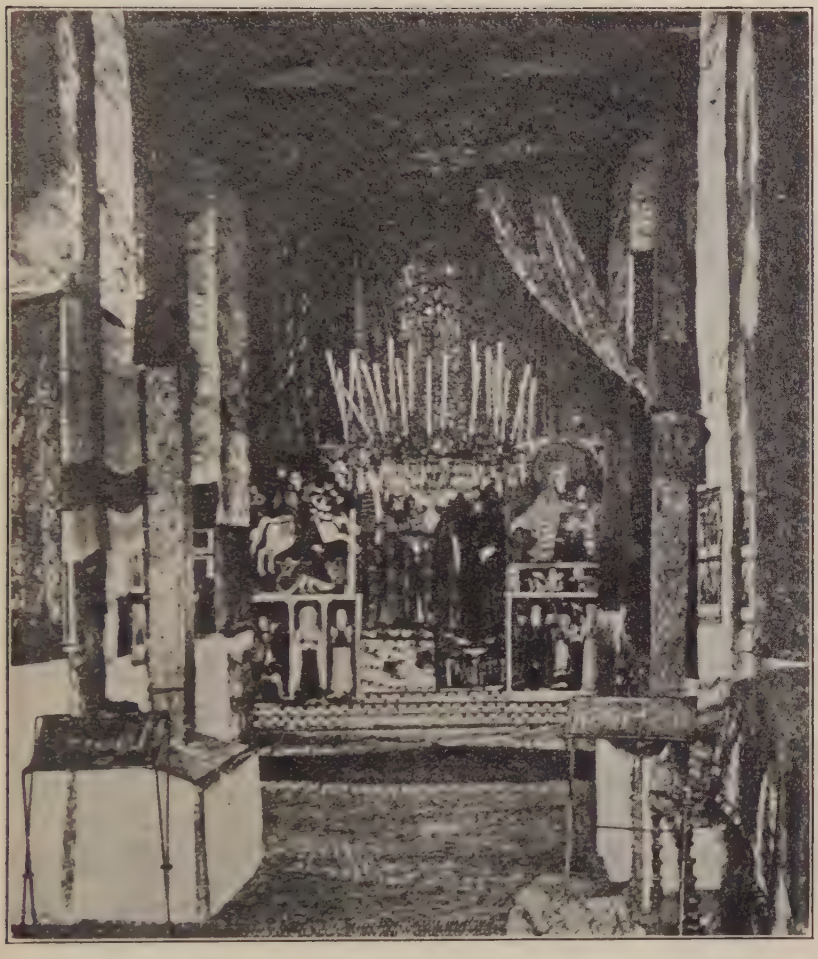
We have a fairly good description of the service by Vivian which we supplement on technical matters by Mercer's *Ethiopic Liturgy.*

"I was privileged to attend a service at Trinity Church close to Menelik's Palace at Addis-Abebba. This meant

rising very early, for the Abyssinians go to church in the small hours, and by seven in the morning they are free to amuse themselves for the rest of the day.—After climbing the precipice up to the church I found a crowd collected outside the outer wall (the wall surrounding the church-yard)—and I noticed that whenever a peasant approached the church on a mule he dismounted and kissed a large black stone, which stood some twenty yards away. Other persons of a more pious turn of mind went right up to the entrance, and kissed not only the lintels but even the floor-beam of the doorway. This was also done by everybody who was coming to church."

"We passed through the porch (the gate or hospitium) into the churchyard. There were a number of large trees under which a crowd of people sat about—on the whole there was a devotional quiet, no buzz of conversation."

"My servant and I made our way into the outer passage (Qene Mahalet) of the circular church, where a row of men leaned against the outer wall which was about only five feet high, and another row leaned against the inner wall, which was of stone and cowdung partly covered with pieces of cotton or chintz.—A few more people lounged about in the middle of the passage, but they were not numerous enough to cause an obstruction. The floor was covered with straw matting and there were some faded carpets near one of the inner doors. Here about twenty priests were gathered in two rows facing each other. The older ones had high white turbans, generally covered in at the top.—Some of the younger ones wore brown blanket cloaks—but the majority wore the ordinary dingy white shamma with its broad scarlet band. The usual attitude was to stand with one hand through the neck-hole of the garment so as to cover the mouth and clutch the handle of a long crutch, which is



The Holy of Holies of Zion Church, Aksum.

Note the entrance to the sanctuary, the two reading desks in the foreground, the candelabra, the withdrawn mantolaet (veil), the native pictures on the wall and door of the sanctuary and the British lithographs on the side walls.

one of the symbols of the priestly office. One of the chief priests held a big book in his right hand and sang with his mouth and nose completely covered up."

"I made my way into an inner passage (the Maqdas), but found it so crowded that I had to return. I noticed however, that the inner wall, behind which is the holy of holies (Qedus Qedusan), was plastered with common European lithographs of religious subjects. There was a faint hum of chaunting within (the Qedus Qedusan). I returned to the neighborhood of the twenty priests, but beyond the remote hum could not make out that anything was going on."

Looking out through the door of the church, Vivian observed—"Mules, some of them with gorgeous trappings, had been left outside the churchyard,—but guns, shields, and spears were brought in. A frequent sight was that of a big man coming in through the porch followed by three or four bearing guns. He would bow to his acquaintances under the trees, more or less deeply according to their importance. Then he stood up some ten paces away from the church door and made severad deep bows almost to the earth. Having thus completed his devotions, he would retire and squat under the trees among his friends.

Though Vivian "could not make out that anything was going on", the "faint hum of chaunting" which he had heard proceeding from the Holy of Holies indicated that the service had already begun.

The Ethiopic liturgy begins with the "*Preparation of the Ministers*". Upon entering the church the celebrant says the prayer of penitence, followed by a psalm of David, and then an invocation--"Yea, O Lord our God, and we beseech thee to send thy Holy Spirit upon this thy church and upon this Tabot, and upon all their holy

vessels." Having made the sign of the cross, the first act is to withdraw the veil which hangs before the Holy of Holies, but before doing this the priest bows to it and offers a prayer. The prayer of Basil is said over the withdrawn veil.

Next comes the *"Preparation of the Instruments"* in which a prayer is said over all the Eucharistic vessels and a special prayer over the machfadat.

The *"Vesting"* follows—but before putting on the Eucharistic garments the celebrant enters the Holy of Holies and worships before the Tabot saying the prayer of John. "If there is a pope [3] present, he shall go to him with the vestment to be blessed and vested; but if there is no pope, he shall bless and vest himself."

During the *"Prothesis"* i. e. "setting forth"—the priest dresses the Tabot and prepares the altar, a prayer accompanying and the prayer of the Father concluding this act, while an assistant reads an exhortation to those in the congregation who expect to receive communion. The akman having been put on and tied with a girdle the celebrant goes round with the Eucharistic host. A prayer is then said over the masob and making the sign of the cross over the bread "he shall take the host in his pure hands while it is moist , and he shall dry one alone; he shall rub the bread with his hand;[4] while he says its blessing, he shall put it in the masob; he shall pour the oblation." Having made the sign of the cross on his mouth the priest blesses the bread and the assistant receives it into the machfad. Taking the host from the assistant, the priest, holding a taper before him, turns toward the Tabot and asks that the oblation be accepted.

[3] Merely the English "papa" and can refer to the chief priest present or any church dignitary.

[4] To test its quality.

He then sets the host in the paten and the deacon pours the wine into the chalice. At this time also, as in all the Eastern Churches except the Armenian, water is mixed with the wine in the chalice. This is known as the "*Mixture*".

Next comes the "*Enarxis*" i. e. "the beginning". This is merely a preliminary office that has become attached to the liturgy. Originally it was probably a substitute for one of the lesser offices used on liturgic days. Following a number of prayers and responses the celebrant covers the bread with a covering and turning around at the Tabot the deacon bows to him and then they bow together. An assisting priest says the Absolution of the Son and the Enarxis is concluded with a long litany.

The "*Little Entrance*" is an elaborate preparation preceding the reading of the Epistle and Gospel and in most of the Eastern Churches includes a procession to the Ambo. This is the chief ceremonial feature in the Mass of the Catechumens. This part of the service is entirely one of censing, at the conclusion of which the celebrant lays his hands upon the deacons and then stretches them over the people.

During "*The Lections*" the priest goes round the vestibule of the church and at each door says the Gloria. Re-entering the Holy of Holies the altar is censed and coming forth again an assistant reads I Cor. 11:23-39. Once more the priest re-enters the Holy of Holies and the subdeacon, going out into the congregation, reads I. Pet. 2:5-6 and then a portion of the Acts of the Apostles. The altar is censed a second time, and the priest, compassing the Tabot three times, goes without the Holy of Holies. The Gospel is now read but before reading the priest signifies what he is going to proclaim on the several days. Carrying a taper before him and followed by

someone bearing the Gospel the priest compasses the Holy of Holies once. Before reading the Gospel the people kiss the book by their several ranks. While finding his place the priest says a short prayer and during the reading of the Gospel an assistant holds a cross before the book. After the Gospel has been read the priest distinguishes the several gospels and concludes with an ascription.

The catechumens are now dismissed by the deacon and the priest says the prayer of Basil before the Tabot in a low voice—"Lord our God, who by reason of thine unspeakable love towards mankind, didst send thine only Son into the world to bring back unto thee the lost sheep; we beseech thee, O our master, turn us not back as we draw nigh to this awful sacrifice, without defilement and trusting not in our own righteousness but on thy mercy wherewith thou hast loved our race; we pray and beseech thy goodness, O lover of man, that this mystery, when thou has prepared it for our salvation, be not to us thy servants and all thy people for condemnation, but that it may be profitable for the blotting out of our transgression and the forgiveness of our negligence."

The Mass of the Faithful opens with responses and prayers following which the assistant censes the altar and then the celebrant taking the censer, makes the sign of the cross over the people and bows three times. The various parts of the service preceding the anaphora are as follows: The *"Creed"*; the *"Lavabo"* in which the assistant takes away the covering of the paten and then washing his hands sprinkles the water towards the people; and the *"Kiss of Peace"*.

The anaphora begins with a short *"Thanksgiving"* which is followed by a long *"Intercession"*. Then comes the *"Institution"* i. e. Our Lord's words over the bread and wine at the Last Supper and especially those from

Mt. xiv. 19 and I Cor. xi. 26. The words of the Institution differ in the various anaphoras used by the Abyssinian Church. The following are from the Anaphora of the Twelve Apostles. "He blessed and brake *and then he shall break the bread into five parts, but not separating,* and he gave to his disciples and he said to them, Take, eat, this bread is my body, *while he shall break it with the spear,* which is broken for you for the forgiveness of sins. *The people shall say,* Amen, Amen, Amen, we believe and confess, we praise thee, our Lord and our God, that this is true we believe. And likewise also the cup, giving thanks, he blessed it and hallowed it, *benediction over the cup,* and he gave it to his disciples, and he said to them, Take, drink, this cup is my blood, *pointing,* which is shed for you and for many, *shaking the cup while he points at the cross.*"

Following the Institution comes the *"Invocation"*—a petition for the descent of the Holy Ghost to change and consecrate the gifts of bread and wine— "that thou wouldst send thy Holy Ghost and power upon this bread and upon this cup." Having blessed the bread and wine the celebrant says the prayer of the *"Fraction"*—the ceremonial breaking of the consecrated bread symbolizing that Christ's body was broken (crucified) for us. Then comes the *"Inclination"*—a prayer of blessing—which the deacon introduces with, "Standing, bow down your head the while." During this part the people stand with their heads inclined—hence the name—and the priest repeats the prayer of penitence. "Let all thy servants and thine handmaids, according to their several names, be loosed and absolved by the Holy Ghost and by the mouth of my humility, me, thy sinful and guilty servant. . . O Lord our God, clement, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy and righteous, forgive my sins and

all those of thy servants." Then the priest, facing the congregation signs them three times with the sign of the cross; and having made mention of those who are with him, repeats a short litany.

The *"Manual Acts"*—the ceremonial manipulation of the consecrated elements (the bread and wine)—follow. The priest says, "Lord have mercy on us, Christ," three times; and repeats the same in a low voice forty-two times. Then the deacon, taking a portion of the consecrated bread, makes the sign of the cross by dipping it into the wine; and taking some of the consecrated wine he makes the sign of the cross with it upon the bread; and again he signs the wine. This is known as the *"Commixture"* and is symbolical of the reunion of our Lord's body and soul in the resurrection.

The celebrant now makes the sign of the cross over the chalice with the broken host. This is called the *"Consignation"*—and the *"Communion"* follows. The words of general administration are:

"This is the body, holy, true, of our Lord and of our Saviour and our God, Jesus Christ, which is given for life and for salvation, unto those who partake of it in faith."

"This is the blood, precious, true, of our Lord and of our Saviour and our God, Jesus Christ, which is given for life and for salvation and for remission of sin unto those who receive it in faith."

The actual words of administration are:

"For this is the body and blood of Emmanuel, our very God."

"This is the cup of life which came down from heaven, the precious blood of Christ."

Each communicant is given a piece of the Eucharistic cake and a spoonful of wine. Before leaving church a

The Dance of the Priests.

This ancient rite, quite African in its present form reminds one of David's dancing before the Ark. Note the white turbans of the priests, the praying sticks, the African drums.

deacon gives water to each communicant who cleanses his mouth in order that none of the consecrated particles might remain; and refrains from spitting that day.

Some place during the *"Communion"* comes the dance of the priests:—"Then all the priests grasp their long crutches and go through a kind of gymnastic exercise.—The crutches are five feet long—the tops are either of ivory or brass.—One priest acts as conductor and the others imitate his movements, all singing loudly through their noses.—The crutches are held in the middle and darted at the ground, now near, now far, with a forward movement made by slightly bending the right knee. It is as though spears were being poised and aimed playfully at objects on the floor. The crutches are then lifted, crooked end up, a foot into the air, they are poised, they are swung, with ever increasing vigour. All of a sudden the whole exercise ceases without any warning whatsoever."

Following the *"Communion"* comes the *"Thanksgiving"* —"We give thee thanks for that thou has granted us to take of thine holy mystery. Let it not be unto guilt nor unto judgment but unto renewing of soul and body and spirit." The priest then goes around, breathing i. e. bestowing the Holy Ghost, and the consecrated elements that remain are censed and consumed.

Next comes the *"Inclination"*. While the people bow their heads the celebrant imposes his hands over them with supplication, "Lord, light of life unquenchable, look upon thy servants and thine handmaids, and sow in their hearts the fear of thy name; in blessing bear fruit, and number them for that which in thine own name hath been given unto them, even thy body and thy blood." Then the assistant addresses a long entreaty to the Virgin

Mary, all the saints, martyrs and virgins, asking their intercession.

Somewhere in the concluding part of the service comes the use of the rattles: "Rattles were distributed.—The handle was jerked slightly and carelessly to and fro so that the discs jingled, while singing went on and three big drums on the floor were patted drowsily with very flat palms. The rattles were not shaken in time as the crutches were, but anyhow, heedlessly. Then all of a sudden the whole business stopped abruptly as though everyone had simultaneously become bored, the rattles were collected and stored away on a ledge for future use."

The service ends with the *"Dismissal"*, in which the celebrant blesses the attending priests and places his hands upon them and the benediction is said. "Partake of the Lord who will place you in his everlasting kingdom; and in wisdom may the Lord bless and behold and illuminate the eyes of thine heart, and in truth may the Lord bless and make his face to shine upon thee, and likewise the women."

The concluding rubric directs that after the celebrant has taken off his vestments he shall genuflect and spit.

CHAPTER XV

MARRIAGE

Marriage in Abyssinia is generally contracted at an early age. Sometimes the bride is eight or nine years old and the bridegroom not much older and above these tender years all the ages and inequalities of ages are observed as elsewhere. When a boy, or a man, desires to marry he places his proposal before the girl's father and unless there is some serious objection to him he is usually accepted. In these pre-nuptial arrangements, as in many parts of the world, the girl's desire or preference in the matter is not consulted. Previous to the marriage there is a betrothal of three or four months during which the prospective bridegroom and chosen bride are not allowed to see each other. Within this period however the girl does not live in seclusion, but frequently visits her future father-in-law, occasionally with some small gift, such as honey, butter, a sheep or a goat; and she is permitted to see her friends as usual.

A few days before the wedding the girl in order that she may appear at her best is given a thorough bath and her hair is combed and greased in the approved Abyssinian fashion. A "dass" or bower is erected out of doors in the court yard or near her father's home. This is merely a crude shelter made by driving long stakes into the ground and then crossing and joining them horizontally at the top with other staves. Over this arbor or pergola green branches are spread. The size of the "dass" depends upon the number of invited guests.

At every wedding, and particularly when it happens to take place in a town, a large number of uninvited guests appear with the hope of obtaining free entertainment and food. These uninvited guests crowd before the bride's home in such great numbers that it is often with difficulty that the invited guests are able to gain admission. For the preservation of order and to facilitate the entry of invited guests, doorkeepers, servants of the house, stand guard; who, should the occasion arise do not hesitate to use the rods which they hold in their hands. In addition to these a number of young men, neighbors or friends of the family, volunteer their services. Some of them help the doorkeepers, others act in a similar manner within the "dass", but most of them serve as ushers and waiters.

The nuptial banquet is held within the "dass". Tables are arranged in long rows and around these the guests squat. There is an abundance of food and drink. As soon as one group of banqueters has finished another group takes its place. Sometimes, depending upon the number of guests, this succession of dismissals and admittances of the guests is prolonged far into the night. Over all these festivities presides the master of the feast.

When the last guest has dined the "dass" is cleared of everyone except the intimate friends of the family. At this point the bride, who until now has not appeared, is presented in a dramatic manner. Preceded by a number of persons holding lighted tapers a male relative trots in carrying the bride slung over his shoulder like a sack of flour and following them comes a group of women who fill the air with exultant cries. The veiled women in the procession are the bridesmaids and they remain veiled throughout the ceremony. The bride is not veiled. The carrier places his burden upon a stool

which has been placed before the master of the banquet and the chief persons present and here the bride receives the blessing of all, each of whom in turn places his hands upon her head and adds some expression of felicitation.

After the bride has been presented dancing begins. The dancing is done by the female relatives of the bride and when they have finished the bride dances. Upon this occasion the women often wear the "dino" or the sheepskin which is worn by the men. The dancing performed by the women may be one of many varieties common in the country. When the women have finished dancing the men execute a war dance with guns and spears. The dancing is usually prolonged until the next morning.

While the wedding banquet is taking place at the home of the bride a similar feast is in progress at the house of the bridegroom. For several weeks the latter has been feasting and entertaining a group of select friends known as the "arkee" or bridesmen. The "arkee" have been chosen long before the marriage takes places and often when the bridegroom and they were children together, when they promise each other that they will act as "arkee" when anyone of them marries. In addition to these chosen companions there is a similar group of uninvited men who have been gathered by the hope of proceeding with the bridegroom to the bride's house where they will be dined.

Early next morning, the time of departure depending upon the distance to be travelled, the bridegroom, the intimate friends and others who have assembled for the occasion, form a procession and start for the home of the bride. Everyone is decked out in all the finery that he can muster, and unless the bridegroom happens to be a man of considerable means, most of the paraphernalia

is borrowed. Leading this motley group are men carrying muskets. Then comes the bridegroom riding a mule, and immediately following him a man bearing a silver mounted shield. The music for the march is furnished by the "embilta" or the "cundan" which is played throughout the journey.

When the procession approaches its destination a nearby plain or some open space is selected and in this chosen place a sham battle is enacted—with galloping horsemen firing off their muskets and spearmen waving their spears.

At the conclusion of the war dance the bridegroom enters the "dass" and takes the seat of honor that has been prepared for him. This is a couch covered with a carpet and cushions and surmounted with a canopy. Here he sits in state with his chosen friends around him while opposite sit the family and the friends of the bride.

As on the previous evening and in the same manner another banquet is held, and again after all have dined and after the "dass" has been cleared of all except the intimate friends, the male relative repeats the ceremony of the evening before, trotting in with the bride slung over his shoulder, preceded by the tapers and followed by the attendant women. This time there is one variation in the performance. The bride has a large cloth something like a pall held over her head. Once more she is placed upon the stool before the master of ceremonies and the elders.

The wedding now takes place. It is a simple ceremony. The bridegroom is asked whether he will take the bride for his wife and when he answers in the affirmative, he proceeds to crook his little finger in the little finger of the bride. This is done under the canopy which is held over the bride's head. Sometimes they

kiss each other. Another peculiar ceremony is enacted by the "arkee." These, placing their hands under her veil, promise to be brothers to the bride—to protect her when in danger, to feed her when hungry, to give her drink when thirsty. This done, the priest, if one is present, or if not, the elders, proceed to give advice to the newly married couple. The ceremony is concluded with the marriage settlement or agreement which is not always quickly or amicably reached.

The first act of the husband is to lead his wife to the door and to turn her over to his friends who previously have gone outside to wait for her. He then returns to the "dass" in order to receive the wedding presents from his father-in-law and these may be many or few according to the wealth or generosity of the giver. They usually consist of articles of household furniture but invariably a gun or a sword is bestowed upon the son-in-law. Following the presentation of these gifts another war dance, as on the preceding day, is held and the husband takes part in it. The dance finished, he appears before the female relatives and friends of the bride and receives small presents from them. While the husband has been thus occupied the bride has been dancing with the "arkee".

The wedding procession now starts homeward in the same manner and the same order as in the morning, with the exception that it now includes the bride riding a mule and with an "arkee" seated behind her in order to keep her from falling off [1]. On reaching the husband's home the party disbands but three or four of the "arkee" remain for the night and act in a peculiar and rather intimate relation to the newly married pair.

[1] Women seldom ride in Abyssinia.

Several days after the wedding the "arkee" again assemble and dressed in their best and accompanied by a "kabaro" visit the houses of the neighborhood where they beg or rather demand presents. These are usually bestowed, and for good reasons, since the "arkee" are privileged characters, indulging in mischief and outrages that would not be tolerated in others. The booty thus secured is presented to the bridegroom as a sort of compensation for the expense to which he had been placed during the preceding weeks.

Another account of an Abyssinian marriage has been given to us in which the contracting parties were middle-aged people. The general outline of the preceding description is confirmed but a few additional details are added. There was the "dass" as previously described, in one corner of which was a couch or "angareb" upon which the bridegroom, the priest, and the best men (the "arkee") reclined; and opposite them on another couch reclined the chief guests. The ordinary guests squatted upon the floor of the "dass". The "agarafi" or "masters of ceremony" were present as usual and kept order with long canes. When the dancing ended a group of children serving as waiters, each carrying the food in a basket upon his head, came out of a nearby hut which was used as a kitchen. The food consisted of raw meat, jugs of beer, hydromel and bread. The beer and hydromel were placed upon low stools. After the priest had said the blessing the feast began. In northern Abyssinia where this marriage took place people always eat hidden from public gaze, so the wedding party was split up into little groups of four to six, each group having a sheet hung over it.

The foregoing accounts are descriptions of a civil marriage in Abyssinia. Naturally the details vary some-

what according to the locality and the means of the contracting parties. Among the Christians of Abyssinia this is the most frequent form of marriage. It is merely a civil contract, the essence of which, is the swearing in the presence of two or more witnesses that the contracting parties will live together as man and wife, and like a civil contract it can be dissolved at any time by mutual consent. There is no legal limit to the number of times that this form of marriage may be ratified or cancelled and there is no period of waiting after a dissolution. Either of the parties of a divorce may marry again at pleasure. So fluid is this form of marriage that sometimes provision is made in the marriage agreement for the event of a divorce, a provision which usually means a payment of a small sum of money to the divorced wife, a sort of alimony. It is of interest to note in view of the possible connection between Abyssinian religion and the ancient Jewish settlement of Elephantine that there is a record of at least one companionate marriage in that colony. Such a marriage, if it can be called by that name, was entirely contrary to Jewish ethics. It must have been due to African influence on the Jewish colony. An influence of the same kind has been at work in Abyssinia.

Concerning the permanence of the civil marriage there has been some dispute but the consensus of opinion seems to be that marriage ties in Abyssinia are very loose. To Rassam's question regarding marriage the Abuna replied, "My son, you have asked me a question which I am unable to answer. This only I can tell you. Abyssinian marriages, with few exceptions, are so abominably revolting, that the issue are all bastards."

Divorce, as stated above, is merely the reversal of the marriage, a dissolution of the civil contract. Should a divorce be desired the man and his wife appear before

a magistrate and renounce each other. When such a separation occurs the wife is allowed to retain what property she possessed previous to her marriage, and unless there was a special stipulation to the contrary in the marriage agreement, she is permitted to keep the presents which her husband had bestowed upon her. If there are children the girls belong to the mother and the boys are given to the father, and if there is but one child, he goes to the mother should he be under seven years of age and to the father if older.

There is a Church marriage solemnized much in the same manner as in other Christian churches, but with the exception of the clergy it rarely takes place until after the civil marriage has been performed and then not until the parties concerned have lived together for a good many years.

The rite of Matrimony[2] like all services in the Abyssinian Church is of considerable length. Though the service is somewhat similar to those used in other churches the bride and bridegroom do not make any responses. During the rite the bride and bridegroom are anointed with oil and clothed in wedding garments. Reversing the usual proceeding the priest takes the man's hand and places it in the hand of the woman, and blesses them with the sign of the cross. Upon several occasions the bride is reminded in the words of St. Paul that wives are subject to their husbands and near the end of the ceremony a long exhortation is addressed to the bride as to her marital position and duties. She has been blessed and honored by the marriage; she should at all times honor and fear her husband, and obey his commands as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him "My Lord". The cere-

[2] Chaine, *Le Rituel Ethiopien* (Rituel de la confirmation et du marriage), Rome 1913, pp. 7-35.

mony is completed with a nuptial mass in which both parties receive the sacrament under a red umbrella.

We also possess a short description of the marriage of a young deacon: After the ceremony in the church was completed the party proceeded to the home of the wife's parents. Though the bridal pair saw each other and were seen by everyone in church the bridegroom was now hidden behind a sheet in one corner of the room and the bride was concealed in an inner chamber.

After the usual feasting a number of small children danced and they were followed by the priests who executed a dance. When the priests had finished the bridegroom was brought from behind his sheet. He wore a cope (?) and a large mitre upon his head and before his face he carried a brass cross. He now joined the priests in a dance. The second priestly dance finished, the bridegroom was introduced to his mother-in-law, and was then led outside by his best men who performed a war dance. In the meantime the bride was carried out upon someone's back and placed upon the mule which was to carry her to her husband's village.

As far as the Church is concerned, this marriage bond is indissoluble, except in cases of adultery, and should it be broken the offenders are automatically excommunicated; that is, they can no longer receive Holy Communion. In theory the Church does not recognize the civil marriage, but due to the general laxity and the prevalence of civil marriage, the Church will allow those who have been divorced civilly to receive Holy Communion under certain conditions; but after the third divorce all connections with the Church cease unless either one, or both of the parties, becomes a nun or a monk respectively.

A third form of relationship is sometimes mentioned

but in reality it is but a variant of the civil marriage. It can be best designated as free-love. In this relationship the contracting parties make their own agreement, without the presence of the requisite witnesses as in civil marriage, to live together as long as they are suited. Civilly, this relationship, openly practised, is tolerated; or at least, there are no penalties attached to it. As to the character of this relationship Rassam remarks that, "It is little better than concubinage".

The Abuna and the bishops cannot marry either before or after their elevation. Priests and deacons may be married provided the marriage takes place before ordination but after ordination they are not allowed to marry. Should a priest or deacon be married before ordination he is not allowed to put away his wife after he has been ordained. In general, the people are said to prefer a married priesthood.

The civil law of Abyssinia recognizes the Levirate marriage (Deut. XXV, 5) but it is not tolerated by the Church. The Church recognizes but one wife and any other female retainer is regarded as a concubine. The canons of the Abyssinian Church impose the same marital laws upon the king (now the Emperor) as they do upon the priests. In the past however, these canons did not keep the chief executive from having a well stocked harem.

Concubines and favorite slaves are not despised but are regarded almost in the same relation as legal wives. There is no distinction made between legitimate and illegitimate children.

CHAPTER XVI

SOME ASPECTS OF CHURCH LIFE[1]

Prayer

The prayers used by the Abyssinian Christians are for the most part composed of the Psalms of David. Each day the faithful must recite the Psalm LXII in the morning and the Psalm CXL in the evening. There are also extracts from the Old Testament to be recited for each day of the week, and the prayers in the Song of Mary and the Song of the Three Children must be recited by all the faithful seven times a day. The prayers for the morning and for the evening must be recited in church on Saturdays and Sundays. On the latter days even the sick attempt to go to church in order to sign themselves with holy water and to be anointed with the oil that burns in the lamps before the altar.

Vows

Vows are frequently taken by Abyssinians and they are of considerable variety. Principally there are the vows of celibacy required of monks and nuns, vows offering money, vows to fast, and vows to perform some act of charity. In addition to these: Each Christian at some period in his life makes a vow to some particular

[1] The purpose of this chapter is to give an account of several phases of Abyssinian Christianity which could not be conveniently placed under other chapters.

Tabot and if he does not do so he will be refused burial in consecrated ground when he dies. Individuals and families make vows to their patron saints to procure their protection and observe these vows by the yearly sacrifice of some animal upon the saint's day. A usual vow is that made for a safe return from a journey. A vow is defined as a pact between man and God and may be made either by mental or verbal prayer. These vows are ordinarly redeemed by certain stated sums of money, a poor man agreeing in advance as to the prerequisite sum, while the rich must pay in proportion to their wealth. Even children make vows.

Pilgrimages

For centuries, we do not know when the practice began, the Christians of Abyssinia have made pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Formerly vast numbers of pilgrims, forming a long procession which was preceded by the cross and beating drums, set out annually for the Holy City, making frequent and long halts along the way for divine services. The rise of the Mamelukes put an end to this custom of group pilgrimages but even after this catastrophe, individual pilgrims attempted and often succeeded in reaching Jerusalem though many of them either perished or suffered martyrdom on their way. It may be said that the Abyssinian church was built in Jerusalem, largely, if not entirely, to minister to these pilgrims.

Today, the Lenten Fast, Hodadi, usually finds a good number of pilgrims in Jerusalem, where, during this period they occupy caves on the east side of the Jordan and confine their diet to bread and water. When Holy Week arrives, they leave their caves and ascend the tra-

The Abyssinian Church in Jerusalem.

ditional Mount of Temptation (Quarantania) and then return to Jerusalem for Maundy Thursday to observe the rite of washing the feet.

To have kissed the stones of the Holy City is considered an act of great piety. Abyssinian priests who have made this pilgrimage are always made much of when they reach home and the stories which they relate concerning the wonders that they have seen are listened to with great interest. When a priest has visited Jerusalem, it is supposed that his place in heaven has been secured beyond a shadow of doubt.

The pilgrims upon their return from Jerusalem bring crosses and other sacred mementos which they wear, and often too, bottles of water from the Jordan which they keep for their own purposes or present to persons of importance.

Debra Libanos i. e. "Mount Lebanon" in Shoa is the monastery containing the shrine of Takla Haymanot the greatest of the Abyssinian saints, and is the most famous and most popular place of pilgrimage in Abyssinia. The roads leading to and from this sacred site are always crowded with pilgrims wearing yellow garments, the pilgrim's badge. On the way to the shrine it is customary as a preparatory rite for the pilgrims to cast themselves into the river Sega Wadaba a stream which flows into the Nile. In addition to the healing waters of the sacred well, discussed below, vows are performed and pledges redeemed. Even the earth is carried away from the grave of Takla Haymanot and on his feast the sign of the cross is made with it upon the forehead. This dust is reputed to be good for many diseases. It is within these holy precincts that the faithful hope to be interred. Upon departing from the shrine each pilgrim leaves an offering according to his means.

Having completed the pilgrimage the pilgrims visit the nearby church of St. Mary where they kiss a cross which is said to have fallen out of heaven. The returning pilgrim is honored by prostrating oneself before him and kissing the dust from his feet.

In addition to Jerusalem and Debra Libanos there are many places of pilgrimage. One of the most popular shrines is that of Amba[2] Maryam situated between Gondar and Debra Tabor, where there is a church dedicated to St. Mary. A few miles south-west of Debra Tabor there is another famous shrine, that of Mahdera-Maryam i. e. "Mary's rest", which contains two churches dedicated to the "Mother" and to the "Son". Another favorite place of pilgrimage is the residence of the Abuna where the pious seek his blessing.

Every Abyssinian Christian at some period in his life makes a vow to the Tabot of some church and ever after, that church is in some peculiar sense his church. No matter where a Christian may be in later life he will attempt to make a pilgrimage to the church of his choice though it be in ruins. After the Galla invasions the Christians who were driven out of their homes continued to make pilgrimages to the churches of their childhood at the risk of great danger.

A Pilgrimage is often prescribed by confessors as a penance.

Sacred Springs

The monastery of Debra Libanos mentioned above contains a holy spring, the origin of which is said to be as follows: Takla Haymanot on arriving there from a

[2] Amba is the name of a peculiar geological formation which gives a rather lurid aspect to the Abyssinian landscape. The amba is a sort of cone with a rounded top, and its strange shape is due to water eroding the porous volcanic rock.

long journey, being thirsty, prayed to God to open a fountain. The prayer was answered and through the agency of St. Michael a stream of water was made to issue from the ground, supposedly coming from the River Jordan. The water from this spring has a strong taste of iron and is reputed by the faithful not only to be a cure for leprosy but also for every kind of disease, especially if the water is used upon the three days which are devoted to the commemoration of the saint's birth, death and ascension. Thus the festivals of Takla Haymanot are always celebrated with great pomp and ceremony at Debra Libanos. To affect a cure it is customary for the pilgrims to drink the water for a period from five to ten days. Where the spring issues from the rocks there is a bed of blue mud from which the pious carry away large quantities and make crosses with it upon their foreheads. This mud is thought to prevent sickness.

Next in importance to Debra Libanos is Sena Markas, named after a great Abyssinian saint who is said to have been a contemporary of Takla Haymanot. This monastery is situated near Etteghe in Shoa and occupies an inaccessible fastness which overlooks a part of the Nile Valley and the whole of north and west Shoa. So extensive is the view that it has given rise to the proverb, "From Etteghe one can see the Echage." The superior of this establishment is the Alaka of Tegulet, a nearby town. At this shrine also there is a sacred spring which is much resorted to and rites similar to those of Debra Libanos are practised.

The village of Addi Ras contains a church which is dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. Within its precincts is a sacred spring to which invalids from all over the country flock in order to be cured of their infirmities.

This stream is of considerable size and force and is located quite near the church in a dense grove, which gives the shrine a more striking and mysterious appearance, in as much as the surrounding region is barren and treeless. The water issues from the ground where the reeds grow and is icy cold with a suspicion of sulphur about it.

Certain hours—sunrise, midday, and sunset—are set for the baths and long before the appointed time the hospitium as well as the churchyard is crowded with pilgrims who lay about on beds of rushes or straw. When the hour for bathing arrives, men and women strip themselves stark naked and get into the cold water. A number of wooden bowls are provided and with these the bathers dash the icy water over each other. The bathing concluded, the patients dress and retire to the hospitium to await the next bath. The lighter maladies are reputed to yield to a course of baths for three days and few are the ailments which will not give way after seven days.

Upon leaving the shrine those pilgrims who have been cured tie a piece of rag to the shrubbery or trees near the spring, a custom which has prevailed for centuries and is still observed in the East. This is merely sympathetic magic, the idea being that the disease is tied to the tree and left behind. The healing property of the water is also attested by the paintings in the church of the shrine which portray some of the miracles which have taken place. There can be no doubt that many miracles have occurred. The pure air of the high altitude, the mineral properties of the water, the mysterious grove with its awful atmosphere and the great faith of the patients have no doubt contributed largely to the success of the shrine.

Another healing shrine is the celebrated thermal springs at Feelamba. The most famous of these springs is that of Aragawi, named after one of the "Nine Saints". Two other of the springs are the Holy Trinity (Selassie) and Mary (Maryam). The water of these springs has a slight smell and taste of sulphuretted hydrogen and are frequented by those having various ailments.

There are many healing springs in Abyssinia and at all of them the procedure and rites are similar. There is also another feature common to most of these shrines the belief that the water of the spring flows underground direct from the Jordan. Nor is this belief peculiar to the Abyssinians. The ancients thought that the sacred source at Delos came in a similar way from the Nile, and many other examples could be cited. No doubt the conception is a survival of the ancient belief in "waters under the earth", i. e. all springs and rivers issued from the great body of water upon which the earth rested.

Sacred Trees

Near Saganeiti there is an interesting old sycamore which stands in the midst of a grove of junipers and wild olives. This sycamore is a sacred tree. A wall has been built around it for protection and little votive offerings—rags, beads, rings, bracelets, and other objects —have been attached to its lower branches by pious pilgrims. The tree happens to be dedicated to Takla Haymanot and the earth around it is reputed to be efficacious in the cure of all sorts of disease. The patients upon arriving here strip themselves naked and sit down under the tree while a companion scrapes up the earth in a pot-

tery jar provided for that purpose and sprinkles it over their backs. Since this particular tree is dedicated to Takla Haymanot the days which commemorate that saint are special occasions for the appearance of great numbers of pilgrims and unusual times for the potency of the cure. Among these days the last Sunday in December is the most important for then the pious kill a sheep or an ox and hold an open-air feast in honor of the saint.

There are numerous sacred trees in Abyssinia and as above they are usually dedicated to some saint. All of these trees however are not shrines of health, but all of them are the object of votive offerings; and occasionally one will find a small tabernacle, merely a small hut or even a mound of stones, somewhere near the base or within the shade of the tree. Tree worship is very ancient and widespread and has not died out even in Christianity, particularly in the East.

Not only are individual trees marked out for veneration but also the trees within the inclosure that surrounds every Abyssinian church are in a sense sacred trees, in fact they form a sacred grove; the idea as well as many of the sites no doubt, having been taken over by the Abyssinian Church from the indigenous religion or religions of the country. Even a ruined church is a place of great sanctity and an object of superstition, and no one would dare disturb anything within its inclosure, nor would anyone venture near it with axe or fire. To break a branch or a twig from a tree within the churchyard is a sacrilege and he who commits it is refused admittance to Holy Communion for a stated period. The ancient ruins of Yeha were preserved only because they happened to be within the inclosure of a ruined church. It is said that in the region south of the Blue Nile, a ter-

Booths (or tabernacles) under a sycamore.

ritory in the hands of the pagan Galla, the trees of a ruined churchyard are spared and regarded with awe.

Clean and Unclean

Claudius in his confession [3] says, "In the book entitled Tarik it stands written—that King Constantine commanded in the days of his kingdom that all baptized Jews should eat of swine's flesh on the day of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. According as it shall seem fit, however, to every man, he may abstain from eating of animal food." The liberal injunction contained in the last sentence has not been followed in practice for most of the prohibitions contained in the Jewish Law are still observed. Abyssinians will not eat the flesh of those animals which do not chew the cud or those which do not have cloven hoofs. Some Abyssinian families have prejudices towards the meat of certain animals for which they can give no reasons nor is the food interdicted by any religious code. Moreover there are often prejudices towards certain parts of an animal which is allowed as food. The reason given for this is that some ancestor vowed not to eat that particular part. In Shoa the sinew upon the hollow of the thigh, called "Shoolada" in Amharic, is forbidden. Those who willfully or inadvertantly disobey the rules with regard to clean and unclean meat are considered as having committed a moral transgression and the act incurs, as was the case in the Mosaic regulations, the stern reprimand of the priest and in addition a severe penance. Similarly to the Jewish practice, all animals used for food must be killed according to a prescribed formula. The animal is thrown down his head turned towards Jerusalem, and

[3] See Appendix III.

while his throat is being cut the words "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" are pronounced. Meat killed by non-Christians will not be eaten nor will an Abyssinian Christian partake of food with a Mohammedan or with a Galla.

In addition to the food regulations there are many clean and unclean rules with regard to the body. A man who has been present at childbirth or who has entered the natal chamber is held to be unclean. Immediate entry into a church after certain actions is forbidden. To have touched polluted garments is another cause of uncleanliness. Women are not permitted to enter church until forty days after the delivery of the child nor may they be present in church during certain periods. As in the case of food, most of these rules are contained in the Mosaic Code.

The Sabbath

Claudius in his confession says, "With regard to our observance of the original Sabbath (Saturday): We do not keep it as the Jews do who crucified Christ—because those Jews neither drink water nor light a fire, neither cook food nor make bread, nor do they move about from house to house; but we keep it in that we celebrate thereon the Lord's Supper, and hold Love Feasts, even as our Fathers the Apostles have instructed us in the Didascalia". Regardless of this disavowal the Sabbath is still strictly observed in Abyssinia. No work of any sort is done upon this day and journies are interdicted. Travellers and others have accused the Abyssinians of observing a Jewish custom and so it is but one that was transmitted by the early Church rather than one taken over from the Jews directly. No doubt Claudius gives us the reason for its

observance — "As our Fathers the Apostles have instructed us in the Didascalia."

Law

Because of its close association with the Church a word might be said about the civil law of Abyssinia in so far as it pertains to religion. As explained in the introduction the government of Abyssinia is an absolute monarchy, the source of new legislation being the Emperor. The law of the country however is contained in the Fetha Nagast i. e. "Laws of the Kings," but often the principles laid down are so broad that in practice a sort of common-law, the law of custom, is generally invoked. In determining the law the clergy are often called in to act as assessors to the civil judges.

The Fetha Nagast is not of native origin but a sixteenth century translation of the "Nomocanon", an Egyptian work of the thirteenth century which was compiled by Abu Ishaq ibn al Assal from the Old and New Testaments, apocryphal New Testament books, the canons of the early Councils, and the so-called Canons of St. Hippolytus. The lex talionis and other harsh measures form a prominent part of the code and educated Abyssinians are said to consider the work obsolete.

The Fetha Nagast begins with the usual ascription, "In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God"; and contains three divisions: The first dealing with the Church, twenty-two chapters; the second with civil law, twenty-three chapters; and the third with the criminal code, seven chapters. The twenty-two chapters concerned with the Church may be summarized as follows:

Chapter I: The church building and all that pertains to it.

Chapter II: The canon of the Scriptures.

Chapter III: Baptism.

Chapter IV: The four patriarchs of the Catholic Church and the Abuna. This chapter also contains rules of jurisdiction and discipline.

Chapter V: The Bishops.

Chapter VI: The Priesthood.

Chapter VII: The Deacons.

Chapter VIII: The Sub-deacons, Anagnosts (readers or masters of ceremony), Singers and Deaconesses.

Chapter IX: The duties of the Priests and Deacons in addition to those mentioned in Chapter VI and VII.

Chapter X: Regarding Monks and Nuns.

Chapter XI: Christian teaching, rearing of children, conjugal relations, and the punishment of witches and sorcerers.

Chapter XII: The Communion Service.

Chapter XIII: Concerning the Eucharistic bread and wine.

Chapter XIV: Prayer.

Chapter XV: Fasts.

Chapter XVI: Charity.

Chapter XVII: Directions for disbursing charity.

Chapter XVIII: Offerings.

Chapter XIX: Saturday and Sunday.

Chapter XX: Martyrs, Confessors, and Renegades.

Chapter XXI: The Sick.

Chapter XXII: The Dead.

The Abyssinian Church and the rest of Christendom

Since the Portuguese period the Abyssinian Church has not been in contact with any other Christian Church except the Coptic until recent times. The Abyssinian Church at Jerusalem offered an opportunity of keeping in touch with other churches but the pilgrims upon returning to Abyssinia brought little or no outside influence with them.

Cognizance of the isolation of the Abyssinian Church was taken into consideration by the Committee of the Lambeth Conference, 1888, in which the desire was expressed that the English Church should offer its sympathy and services should the opportunity arise. A similar sentiment was voiced by the Committee of the Lambeth Conference in 1908.

Upon several occasions the Abyssinian Church has come into official contact with other churches. During the reign of Menelik II the Abuna, Matewos, was allowed to accept the invitation of the Russian Government to visit the Russian Church. At the coronation of King Edward VII (June 24th 1901), the Votive Cross which had been given by His Highness Ras Makunan (the Abyssinian Envoy to the Royal Coronation) to Westminster Abbey for His Majesty's recovery from sickness, was borne at the head of the procession of the Clergy into the Abbey. This cross has been permanently placed on the Altar of Henry VII's Chapel.

CHAPTER XVII

DEATH AND BURIAL

When it is thought that a sick person is about to die the priests are immediaetly summoned to administer extreme unction and the last sacrament. Ordinarily the rite of unction requires the presence of seven priests but if this number cannot be secured any number under seven, and even one, is sufficient. Under ordinary conditions the person who is ill is taken to church for this service but in serious cases such as the one here pre-supposed, the consecrated oil is carried to the stricken man's home. The rite of unction is quite long and possibly in emergencies can be shortened.

A prerequisite for this last rite is the sick man's confession and the priest's absolution. This is absolutely necessary if the services of the Church are desired for the consecrated ground of the churchyard is sternly denied to those who die without deathbed confession and absolution. Should this happen the dead man is buried in some unconsecrated ground usually by the highway side.

After confession has been heard and absolution given the last rite begins. Seven unlighted wicks are placed in a lamp which has been filled with pure oil, usually olive oil, and a cross and a book containing the Gospels are placed before the lamp. The service is composed of seven parts. Each part—consisting of prayers, selections from the Gospels and the Epistles, and psalms—centers

around the lighting of one of the wicks in the lamp. These wicks are lighted one after the other. During the first service, the lighting of the first wick, the oil in the lamp is blessed. The seven wicks probably symbolize the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

After all wicks have been lighted, the officiating priest holds the book of the Gospels and the cross over the head of the stricken person and the priests who are present place their hands upon the book. A few prayers follow and then the sick man is anointed, evidently with the oil that is in the lamp. The service is ended with the snuffing of the wicks and a long concluding prayer. The consecrated elements, which have been brought from the church, are now administered.

The priest tactfully exhorts the sick man, not because he is in danger of dying but merely as a precaution, that he should make a will. Due to the general ignorance of writing which exists in Abyssinia the will is rarely written but given orally to the priest in the presence of witnesses.

Should the sick man die the funeral is held upon the same day, usually within two or three hours after death. Should death take place in the evening the funeral is held upon the following morning. As soon as death occurs the priests are again summoned and relatives notify the villagers from the house top; while messengers, who have been sent to nearby villages, call out from some prominent eminence, that, "Such a one, son, or daughter of such a one, is dead. Come ye to the funeral, and bring the crosses and the incense bowls." Immediately upon arrival the priests begin to chant prayers and the friends and relatives who are present weep and wail.

The body is washed, wrapped in a cotton shroud,

with the face covered, and placed upon a couch. The mateb is taken from the body, immersed in water and restored to its place. In addition to this ornament which every Christian wears there are other articles. Women wear the enchifchif which is a belt of charms and amulets. This is also immersed in water and restored to the body. Many Abyssinians wear a set of amulets around their necks. This is usually a strip of parchment about six feet long, which when rolled up fits into a case of morrocco leather. Upon this roll there is usually written some legend about the Virgin Mary which is illustrated. Some of these rolls are preserved in our museums under the heading of magic rolls and that is what they are. Often the roll is a charm against sickness and contains a diagram showing how to obtain the desired end. The Virgin's name as well as other saints' names always occur. As with most magic scrolls it is difficult to make anything out of them. Their efficacy seems to be in proportion to their obscurity. At death these magic rolls are unrolled and placed along the body.

It must be said that neither the enchifchif nor the magical rolls form a part of the official religion of the Abyssinian Church. These charms are usually the work of disreputable scribes or of some one who is thought to have dealings with the devil, and though they are tolerated, they are frowned upon by the more enlightened among the clergy.

When the body has been properly laid out it is removed from the house. The couch is raised to the shoulders of six friends who act as pall bearers and upon the firing of a gun as a salute and a signal the funeral procession starts for the church. As in all countries the grandeur of the funeral depends upon the

financial circumstances of the deceased's family and upon his social position.

The body is followed by the family and friends who display their grief in a violent manner by rubbing their foreheads and faces with the rough ends of their garments which they hold in both hands. Preceded by brilliantly colored orange umbrellas, the property of the church, the procession makes seven halts upon the way

The cemetery at Addis-Abebba.

to the church, and at each halt incense is burned over the body while the priests and scribes read and pray. Each of these halts is a little service in itself. During the service the whole of the Psalms is read, a portion being alloted to each of the scribes and priests present, who read their respective parts at the same time. In addition to the psalms certain portions of the New Testament are

read. The seven halts which are made are so timed that the seventh halt is made at the church gate. Hence the time and distance between halts depend upon the distance to be travelled. Should the person live near the church some of the service is read previous to starting. When the distance is considerable the pall bearers are changed and other friends take their places. As the procession moves along a pall is waved alternately with a fanning motion.

Upon entering the church the bier is surrounded by twelve lighted tapers which symbolize purity of life and another long service is held. While the service is going on in church the grave is being dug in the churchyard. There are no regular grave diggers but almost anyone will volunteer for the task as it is considered an act of Christian piety and charity to assist in burying the dead.

When the service within the church is completed the body is wrapped in a mat (caskets are rare and are only used by those of wealth and importance) which is woven out of date-palm branches. The palms are in imitation of those which were spread before Our Lord upon his entry into Jerusalem and symbolize that death is the Christian's entry into the spiritual Jerusalem.

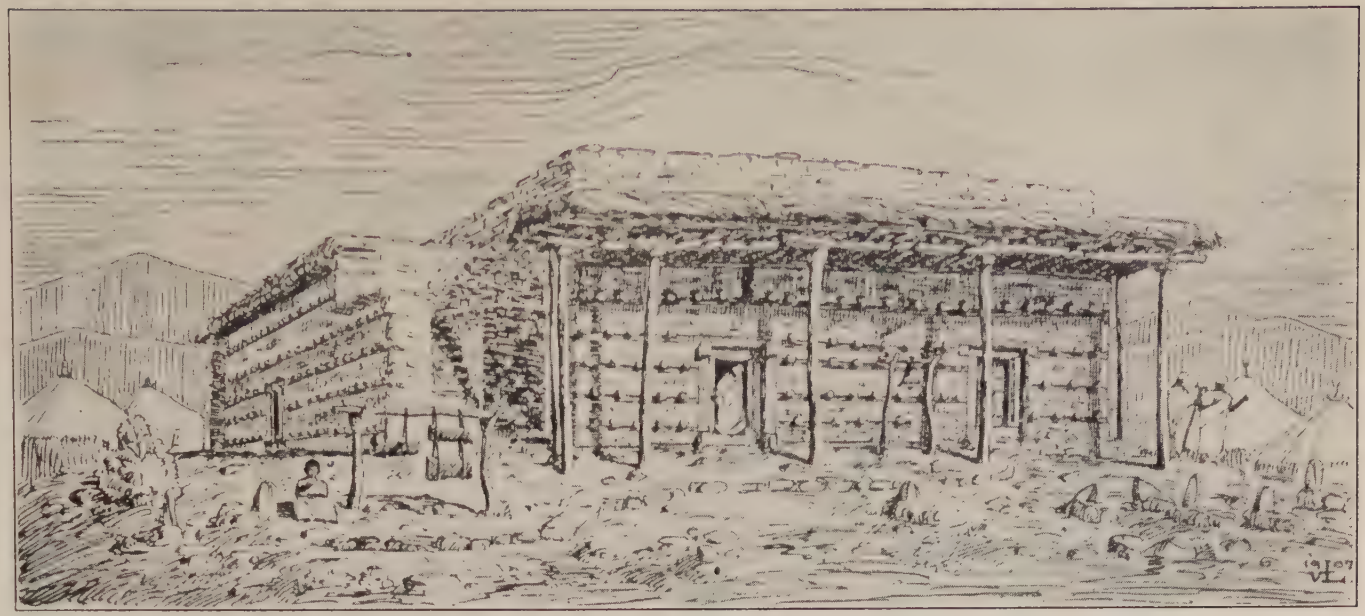
The procession now proceeds to the grave. Upon reaching the grave the priest descends into it and censes it. Then the body is lowered. The grave has been dug so that the body can be laid to rest with the head pointing to the west in order that upon resurrection day the arisen body might behold the rising sun. Into the grave are placed: the twelve tapers, which were almost consumed during the service in the church; a quantity of frankincense; and a copy of a book called *Lefafa Zadik*, i. e. *The Supplication of the Righteous*.

The use of the churchyard for burial is not indiscriminate but certain rules and regulations are observed. The clergy alone have the privilege of a sepulchre within the church, in the Qene Mahalet; or, if they so desire, they may be buried on the eastern side of the churchyard which is reserved for their exclusive use. Graves here however must be removed at least four paces from the church porch. The north side of the churchyard is alloted to the aristocracy, and the south and west sides are given over to warriors, women, and children.

A peculiar custom which has been traced back into the neolithic age and at one time was almost universal is still observed in Abyssinian burials. Men of rank and men of wealth, who during life have not worked in iron or wood, are covered in their sepulchres with green branches of the juniper tree; but those men who have worked in these materials, smiths and artificers (regarded as sorcerers), are securely sealed in their graves by great stones which are heaped over the body.

Immediately after burial arrangements are made for requiem masses. These are said daily for forty days should the deceased be a man of wealth, but when the family is poor it is usually considered sufficient that five masses be said during the same space of time; on the third, seventh, twelfth, thirtieth and fortieth days. In addition to these masses a yearly mass is said upon the anniversary of the death.

The quick burial of the dead does not allow sufficient time for friends and relatives who live at a distance to be present and so the third day after burial is set aside as a day of mourning. Upon the appointed day the friends and relatives assemble in some open place as near the church as possible. Sometimes the marketplace is chosen. Here the funeral is re-enacted in every



An old Church in Asmara.

Note the graves in front, the phonolith on the left, and the European bell on the right.

detail. An artificial figure, constructed of anything available, often only a few cushions, is placed upon a couch and covered with a white cloth, and around this manikin the mourners gather. Those who possess guns discharge them into the air while the rest bow their heads, weep, and rub their faces with their garments.

Upon this occasion also those who are closely related to the deceased, both male and female, shave their heads. In Tigre and other provinces east of the *Taccazy* the nearer relatives in addition to shaving their heads scarify themselves upon the foreheads and temples by abrading the skin with violent rubbing. Considerable time is required for these scars to heal and often they remain for life. It is said that the people of Amhara consider the practice unlawful and that it is seldom observed. Due to continual crusades and prohibitions against the custom grief at funerals is no longer so violently displayed as formerly.

Mourning also includes the improvisation of verses in praise of the dead. Each person present takes his turn in improvising and the life and actions of the deceased are related in great detail. At the end of each verse the bystanders, who form a chorus, break in with a refrain. Throughout the whole performance the embilta and cundan keep time. Frequently, especially when the deceased has been a person of importance, professional singing women attend with the hopes of either a reward or of partaking in the feast which follows the mourning.

When all the relatives and friends of the dead have arrived and have had sufficient time to take part in the ceremonies the party retires to the house where a banquet is placed before them. This, as far as the mourners are concerned, concludes the funeral ceremonies for the

present; but the family of the deceased must provide provisions for the priests upon certain of the days which follow: on the thirtieth day after death various comestibles including a sheep, and on the fortieth day one or two cows including garnishments. Upon the eightieth day the priests and scribes have a feast and that night perform the last of the requiem masses. Food is also provided yearly for the clergy when the annual mass is said upon the anniversary of the death.

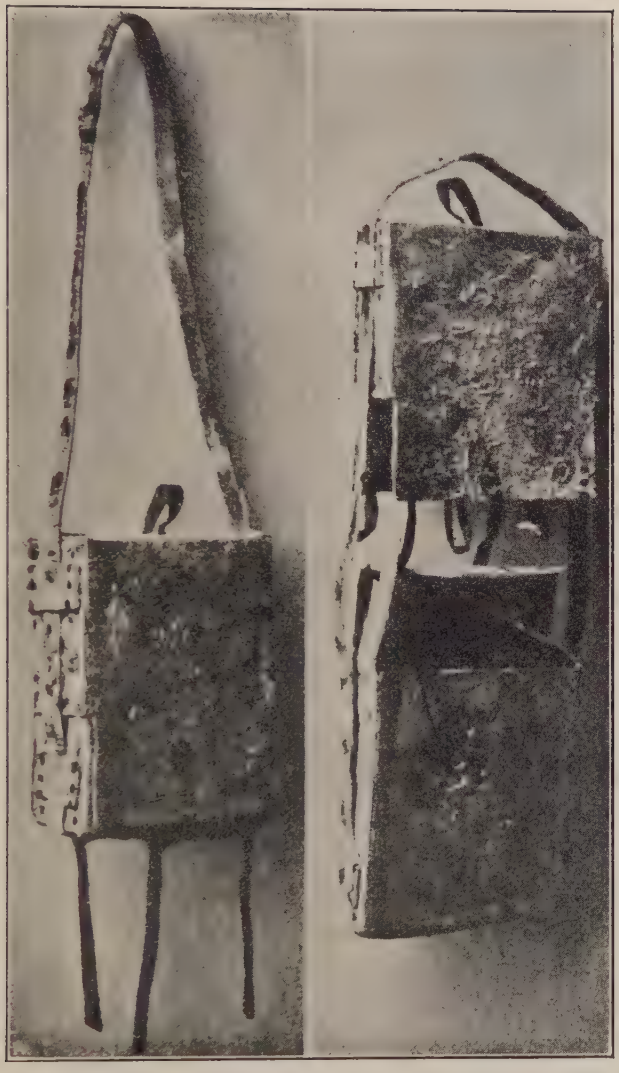
About six months after the funeral, though it may be postponed to a more convenient time should the circumstances of the deceased's family require it, the final funeral banquet or "teskar" is held. Should the person in whose memory it is observed have been a person of importance the feast lasts as long as seven days. Upon the first day the priests of the parish and those of the surrounding parishes, often thirty or forty, gather in the parish church and say prayers for the deceased; after which they adjourn to the banquet. Before any guest may eat, the poor, who always gather outside for the occasion, must be fed. The feeding of the poor is a very important part of the "teskar" and few would dare to neglect it. In answer to their cries a man appointed for the occasion counts them and tapping everyone upon the head with a stick distributes to each a portion of food. After receiving the food they severally offer a prayer for the deceased. During the second day of the feast the important men of the neighborhood are invited and with them the priests of the parish. Each day the rank of the invited guests decreases until the seventh day which is set aside for women only.

The length and elaborateness of the "teskar" depends upon the wealth of the family. With the poor the feast lasts but a short time but they strive to extend it as

long as possible. Usually three "dasses" or booths are constructed, one for the priests and people of importance, a second for the commoners, and a third for the women. Thus in the case of the very poor the feast is finished in one day.

At some period after death the relatives of the deceased often have the body exhumed and the bones collected in a cotton bag which is hung in the Maqdas of the parish church. Here they remain until there is an opportunity for them to be taken to their final resting place in the great cemetery at Debra Libanos.

Mourning is worn for a certain period by the nearest one related to the deceased. This is usually black. White is the universal rule in Abyssinia and any other color signifies that the person is in mourning. It is also customary for the friends of the deceased's family to pay visits of condolence.



Leather case for the Gospel; closed on the left, open on the right.

CHAPTER XVIII

MANUSCRIPTS AND LITERATURE

The literature of the Abyssinian Church—the Bible, liturgy, canons and other theological works—is written in Ge'ez. This literature is not extensive, yet, considering Abyssinia's centuries of isolation, the wars without and the internicine strife within, it is surprising how much has come down to us. By a peculiar stroke of fate several important works, the Book of Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, and the Ascension of Isaiah, compositions which are not extant in their entirity in any other Christian literature, were preserved for us by the Abyssinian Church.

The literature of the Abyssinian Church might well be called the literature of Abyssinia, for with few exceptions all the latter is concerned with the religion of the country; and even the few non-ecclesiastical works begin with some such ascription as "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, One God." In no other country has the literature been so permeated and moulded by the Church as that of Abyssinia. Just as the classics were preserved by the monks during the Middle Ages so also Ethiopic literature was preserved by the monasteries of Abyssinia.

All this literature is in manuscript form as the printing press was never introduced into Abyssinia and even now only a few exist, and these are controlled by foreign missions which are concerned merely with the modern

languages of the country. The manuscripts are written upon sheep or goat skin and are of two forms: those which are in volumes, having pages; and those which are in rolls. The former are usually bound in boards and are often enclosed in a leather case which is suspended from the shoulder by a strap; the latter, as their name signifies are merely rolls of parchment, and these also have cases, a small cylindrical leather case which is hung around the neck. The manuscript rolls are practically confined to magic rolls and diptychs. Some of the manuscripts are illuminated, often elaborately, in the art peculiar to the country; and all of them are rubricated.

The preparation of a manuscript is as follows: A piece of damp parchment is tightly spread over a frame, pinned down and allowed to dry. Occasionally in order that his letters may be perfectly horizontal the scribe rules off lines upon the surface of the damp parchment with a blunt instrument. These lines as well as the marks left by the pins can be seen in many of the manuscripts. The ink is a mucilage of gum-arabic mixed with lamp black and is of such a thick nature that it retains its intensity for ages. The pen is made from a reed but does not have a nib and from constantly having its point chewed by the scribe becomes a small brush. The small end of a cow's horn stuck into the ground near where the writer squats serves as an ink stand. The process of producing a manuscript is said to be a very tedious task— "As with the Chinaman, each individual character must on completion, be scrutinized from every point of view, before proceeding to the next. Every word must be read aloud by the delighted artist, spelt and respelt and read again; and the greasy skin must be many times inverted, in order that the happy effect may be thoroughly studied." Sometimes as much as seventeen years have been expended

upon a single manuscript, especially when it requires illumination. Ignoring these exceptional cases about a page a day is written. As a rule they are beautifully written, not only are the characters clearly drawn, but also each word is carefully separated by a colon.

Abyssinian literature was unknown to Europe until the Portuguese period when manuscripts were first sent to Europe by the missionaries. Following the withdrawal of the Portuguese the flow of manuscripts ceased, though Peirese, a French bibliophile of the seventeenth century occasionally received them in exchange for mathematical and architectural books from Vermellius, a French adventurer in charge of the Abyssinian army. Renewed interest in collecting manuscripts began with Bruce and Krapf and has continued to the present time. At the siege of Magdala in 1868 a considerable number of manuscripts which King Theodore had collected for the purpose of founding a royal library fell into British hands, one of them acquiring an interesting history. [1]

Ethiopic manuscripts have suffered the vicissitudes of fortune, especially during the Galla invasions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and again in 1838 when a valuable library belonging to the Abyssinian Church at Jerusalem was burned by the Turks on the pretext that the documents had become infected with the plague.

The earliest manuscripts date from the fifteenth cen-

[1] These manuscripts form the bulk of the collection of Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum. Two of them were copies of the "Kebra Nagast" which were catalogued by Wright (Catalogue of the Ethiopic MSS. in the British Museum, London, 1877) as Oriental 818 and Oriental 819. King John IV upon his accession to the throne in 1872 wrote to Lord Granville asking that Oriental 819 be returned to Abyssinia. The request was complied with and the return of the manuscript is said to be the only occasion on record when the British Museum has restored an acquisition to its original owner.

tury but the majority of them come from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Modern travellers express doubts as to whether there are many ancient manuscripts left in Abyssinia, and it is extremely doubtful whether anything valuable remains to be discovered. What manuscripts remain are carefully guarded and cannot be purchased. Most of the manuscripts which are deposited in our museums remain to be published.

Ethiopic literature possesses two features: it lacks originality and it it mostly a literature of translation.

The history of Ethiopic literature may be conveniently divided into four periods: First, a period of growth which followed the introduction of Christianity and continued for three centuries. Following this came a period of darkness of which we practically know nothing, either of the history of Abyssinia or of its literature. At the end of the thirteenth century there came a revival of literature during the reign of Yekuno Amlak. This period of revival lasted about a century and a half up to what has been called the "Golden Age" of Ethiopic literature, in the times of Zara Yaqob (1433-1467) and his successors. The fourth period was a time of gradual decay, given momentum by the Islamic and Galla invasions, the dissentions caused by the Portuguese, and continued by divisions and quarrels within the kingdom itself.

First Period

Except the books of the Bible, which were translated at various times, and a few apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works, very little remains from this period. There is a work known as *Qerlos* i. e. Cyril, because the first part of it was written by St. Cyril of Alexandria,

and there are also translations of the *Rules of Pachomius*, and the *Physiologus*, the latter a work on natural history. Though we do not possess any manuscripts from this period it seems certain that the Liturgy must have been translated.

Second Period

A great change came in this period. Abyssinia was now isolated from the rest of Christendom by the conquest of Islam and instead of translating from the Coptic and Greek as formerly, most of the translations with possibly a few exceptions were made from the Arabic. The name chiefly connected with this period is that of Abba Salama.

The chief works are the Weddase Maryam (Praises of Mary), a book of hymns; the Mashafa Saatat (Book of Hours); the Mashafa Genzat (a Burial Service); the Gadla Hawaryat (Contendings of the Apostles)—an apocryphal work containing thirty accounts of the apostles and their followers, and the acts of S. S. Thomas, Peter and Paul—; the Fekkare Iyasus (Interpretation of Jesus)—a sort of Messianic work, prophesying the advent of a King Theodore who was to usher in an age of peace and prosperity—; the Mashafa Mestir (Book of Mystery)—a controversial work against heresies—; and the Zena Ayhud (History of the Jews). The latter is a translation of the Chronicle of Joseph ben Gorion a Jew and contains a history of Jews from the time of Cyrus to the capture of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A. D. In addition to the above works there are numerous lives of saints and martyrs.

Of particular interest in this period is the Kebra Nagast (The Glory of Kings). This is not a history

but a romance and was written for a definite purpose, to trace the royal lineage back to the beginning of the world and to give it lustre by claiming a descent for it from Solomon. It contains the famous legend of Makeda or Queen of Sheba.

Third Period

The Golden Age of Ethiopic literature as this period is called continues the general features of the preceding period with the exception that two new types of literature are added: The first of these new types was an attack directed against the superstition and magic of the country which inevitably elicited a number of counter works from the other side. The second type was a development of chronicles or annals which with a few breaks have continued down to the present time. These chronicles are concerned with the activities of the king rather than of the country and the people, yet they contain valuable historical material.

The chief works of this period are: the Sinodos; the Didascalia; the Testament of our Lord; the Deggua; the Mawaseet (i. e. answers—an antiphonary); the Meraf (a collection of hymns and anthems for various festivals); the Seneksar; an universal history written by George the Egyptian, known in Abyssinia as Giyorgis walda Amid; and the Gannat (Garden or Paradise) or the Zenahomu la-Abau keburan (stories of the Honored Fathers). The last work is a collection of extracts from the Fathers.

Several additional works are of interest because they are severally connected with the three kings who ruled during this period. The Mashafa Berhan (Book of Light)—a polemic against magic; the Egziabher Nagsa

(the Lord reigneth)—a collection of hymns for saints days; and the Arganona Dengel—a collection of praises in honor of the Virgin. These three works are ascribed to King Zara Yaqob. The Malkea Maryam (Likeness of Mary) and a collection of Sellase (six-line stanzas) have been assigned to King Naod. A translation of Chrysostom's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* was undertaken at the suggestion of King Lebna Dengel.

Fourth Period

With the fourth period the decadence of Ethiopic literature begins and continues to the end of the seventeenth century. This was the period of the Islamic and Galla invasions and as to be expected it was not very fruitful in literary results.

The monastery of Debra Libanos is an important contributor to this period. Near the close of the sixteenth century Enbaqom (Habakkuk), a convert from Islam and formerly a merchant of Yemen in South Arabia, became the grand prior of Debra Libanos. To him are accredited the *Superiority of the Christian Faith* and the Anqasa Amin (Gate of Faith)—the purpose of both was to win back those Christians who had become converted to Islam. He also translated the *Universal History* of Abu Shakir and the *Story of Baralam and Yewasef* (Baarlam and Josaphat)—the latter a popular religious romance. A similar work from the same period is the *Romance of Alexander*. Salik, a monk of the same monastery, translated an important theological work, the Mashafa Hawi, which is a collection of extracts from the Fathers. Another work, Talmid (Pupil), came from the same monastery.

In addition to these works eminating from Debra

Libanos there are the Confession of Claudius (Galawdewos); the Sawana Nafs, also attributed to Claudius; the Faus Manfasawi (Spiritual Medicine)—a penetential work; the Abridged Chronicle, which is a resume of the chronicles from Yekuno Amlak (1269-1284) to Lebna Dengel (1508-1540); and an account of the Galla wars written by a monk named Bahrey. Of particular importance during this period is the Fetha Nagast, and the works of two philosophers, Zara Yaqob (1599-1692) who evolved a rationalistic system of religious philosophy, and his pupil Walda Heywat. The works of these two thinkers are both called *Enquiry,* and are appeals to reason. Another work which might be classed as philosophical is the Mashafa Falasfa Tabiban *Book of the Wise Philosophers,* a collection of sayings from the wise men of various nations and times.

Ethiopic literature may be said to stop with the end of the seventeenth century. Since the tenth century Ethiopic had probably ceased to be a spoken language and Amharic had taken its place. Though the chronicles continued to be written in Ethiopic it was a hybrid variety known as "lesana tarik," and finally they were written entirely in Amharic.

CHAPTER XIX

HAGIOLOGY

A considerable amount of Ethiopic literature is concerned with the lives of the saints. Every church possesses the Seneksar that contains accounts of the various saints which are read upon their respective days. "Gadl", the Ethiopic word for life used with regard to the life of a saint has a technical meaning and is similar to the Latin "Acta", i. e. "struggle" or "conflict". According to Littmann the lives of the saints were first written in the fourteenth century and the model was borrowed from outside sources even in the case of native saints. Later the lives of the native saints became more original but the model still remained stereotyped.

Historically the lives of the saints have been divided as follows:

(1) The Aksumitic Period: To this period belong the "Nine Saints" who are said to have come from Egypt or probably from Syria. All these saints have Ethiopic names except Pantalewon, the Greek Pantaleon. Of these saints those most frequently mentioned are Aragawi the most famous of all, Garima and Pantalewon. In addition to these, Yared the reputed founder of church song, and King Kaleb (Elesbaan) the hero of the sixth century wars in southern Arabia, belong to this period.

(2) The Period of Transition: Not many names have come down from this perod. Lalibala and Na

akueto Laab, two kings of the Zague dynasty, come in this period but the most famous saint of all is Takla Haymanot.

(3) The Period of Persecution: This was a period of conflict between the Church and the State. The conflict gathered around the marriage of King Amda Seyon to his step-sister an action considered immoral by the clergy, the keeping of Sabbath, and the date of Christmas. The saints of the period are largely taken from the clerical antagonists. Chief among these are Basalota Mikael, Filpos (Philip) of the monastery of Debra Libanos, Aron the wonder worker, Filpos of the monastery of Debra Bizan, and his pupil Yohannes. Ewostatewos (Eustathius), the founder of an order of monks; and King Tewodros (Theodore), belong to this period.

(4) The Period of Zara Yaqob; This king and his wife are commemorated as saints, and also his general, Amda Mikael. Mabaa Seyon and Besua Amlak belong to this period.

(5) The Period of the Portuguese: Kings Lebna Dengel and Galawdewos (Claudius) achieved sainthood through their defense of the ancient faith. Walatta Petros, the founder of an order of nuns, also belongs to this period.

The Miracles of the Virgin Mary

The East has always been disposed to build up legends around some great personality and just as tales were woven around the names of Solomon and Alexander the Great so also in the early centuries of the Christian Church many legends sprang up around the life of the Virgin Mary after the Crucifixion. Long before the end of the sixth century a number of collections of these

miracles of the Virgin were in circulation and especially famous was the "Transitus" i. e. "The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary". As early as 494 many of these collections had been condemned at Rome by Bishop Gelasius and his Council but ecclesiastical authority was powerless either to diminish their popularity or to stop their dissemination. At an early and unknown date these miracles found their way into Egypt, then up the Nile into upper Egypt and Nubia [1], and finally up the Blue Nile into Abyssinia. Though we do not know even the approximate date when these miracles entered Egypt and Abyssinia it is agreed that they were generally known and read in the Coptic and Abyssinian Churches before the close of the tenth century. Nor do we know when the canon of these miracles was fixed by the Coptic Church but it could scarcely have been before the end of the twelfth century.

A considerable portion of the Ethiopic manuscripts in our museums and libraries are concerned with the miracles of the Virgin Mary. These manuscripts are of different dates and the number of miracles in them varies from 30 to 316, though the complete canon is said to contain 366, one for each day of the year and an additional miracle for the extra day of leap year.

There are two features regarding the miracles of the Virgin which deserve notice: First—the miracles in some of the manuscripts are properly speaking not miracles at all but merely stories concerned with the daily life of erring monks and nuns recording how they were helped by the Virgin. While these tales are intended to convey a moral some of them are a questionable nature

[1] A Christian kingdom was founded in Nubia in the sixth century by Silko. The capital was Dongola or "Old Dongola", a city situated on the east bank of the Nile about 350 miles above Wadi Halfah.

and are not dissimilar to stories in the Arabian Nights or Boccacio. Second—one would expect to find all these miracles taking place in Egypt and Abyssinia, but it is somewhat surprising to learn that the majority of them occur in Turkey, Italy, France, Holland, and in other European countries. It was formerly suggested that these miracles of a European origin were introduced into Abyssinia by the Portuguese but unfortunately for this theory the oldest manuscript containing them antedates the arrival of Covilham. Again, we have the originals of some of these miracles in French and Latin. Collections of miracles of the Virgin Mary were made in Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and some of these found their way into Arabic and then into Ethiopic. Hence it seems quite certain that the miracles of an European origin could not have entered Abyssinia before the end of the thirteenth century.

That extraordinary honor was paid to the Virgin in Egypt and Abyssinia can be ascertained from a selection of "The Book of Rules" [2] which one Abyssinian scribe appended to his manuscript of the miracles of the Virgin Mary. "The Book of Rules" required that the miracles should be read every Sunday and upon each of the thirty-two festivals commemorating the Virgin. These festivals were equal to Sundays and upon them no one was to work nor was anyone to absent himself from church. Upon these days too women were required to put aside their ornaments and to shear their heads. The ceremony of reading the miracles began with a blessing

[2] "The Book of Rules" came from the Church of Al Mu'allakah—"the hanging", because it is suspended between two bastions and must be entered by stairs—in Cairo, which was probably founded in the sixth century. These rules are said to have been revealed by the Virgin and were translated from Arabic into Ethiopic during the reign of Zara Yaqob.

which was pronounced by the Patriarch, Abuna, Bishop or priest who then successively faced the East, West, South, and North. Following this he prostrated himself before the Tabernacle or Tabot three times and censed the sanctuary, once for each of the Three Persons of the Trinity. The introductory service was concluded by censing the image or picture of the Virgin meanwhile making entreaty for her intercession. Three miracles of the Virgin were then read in succession if the reader happened to be skilled but if not then one of the shorter miracles. During the reading the congregation stood.[3] At the conclusion of the reading three priests severally censed the Tabernacle, the image or picture of the Virgin, and the reader.

The miracles of the Virgin were contained in two types of manuscripts, those for private use and those for public worship. In the latter a metrical composition of four or five lines followed each miracle in which its contents were summarized. This stanza was sung by the congregation at the conclusion of each miracle in order to give the reader a little rest. The same method is used in the Seneksar. The service ended with Hallelujahs and Salutations to the Virgin and to the Seven Johns and to the Twelve Apostles.

Aragawi

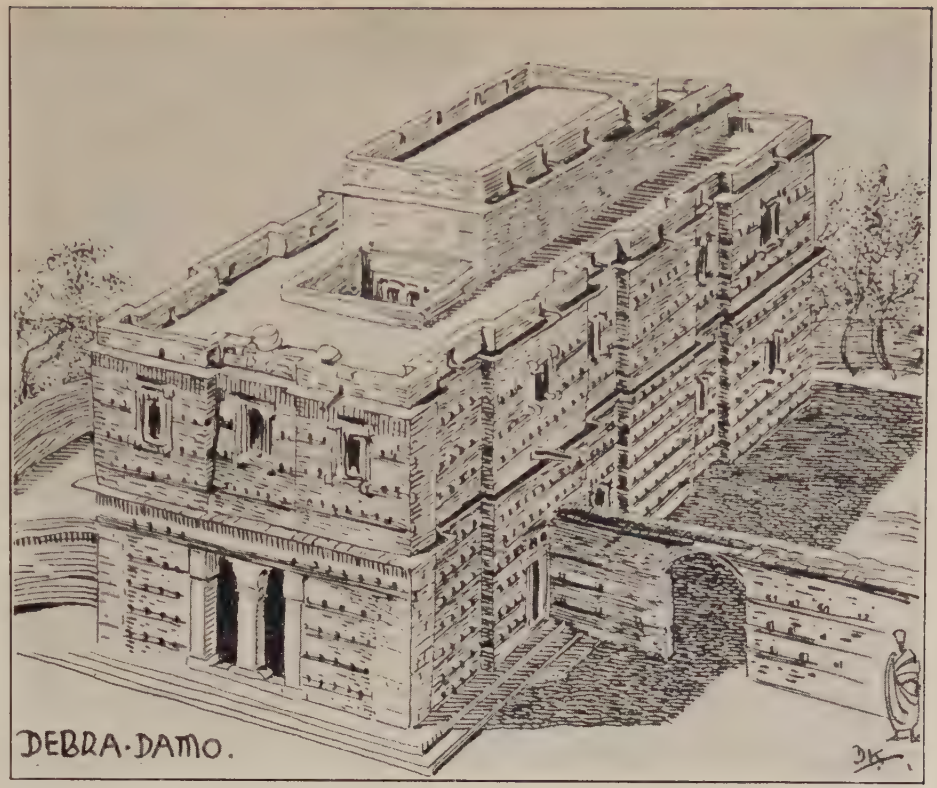
Aragawi is the best known and the most renown of the "Nine Saints" who entered Abyssinia at the end of the fifth century. Living as he did in an age noted for its miracles and at such a remote period it is not surprising that the accounts of his life are somewhat fanciful as well as contradictory. Some versions relate that his teaching and miracles immediately gained for him a

[3] The posture for prayer.

vast following but at the same time much opposition and persecution, while other records of his life tell us that he sought retirement from the world in order that he might devote his time to contemplation. Legend further relates that he founded the celebrated monastery of Debra Damo in Tigre and in the following manner: The saint, having arrived at the rocky eminence upon which the monastery was later built, and having walked around it several times without finding a path to its summit, prayed to God for assistance. The prayer was immediately answered by the appearance of a large boa-constrictor which offered to carry the saint to the top of the mountain in its mouth. Aragawi however declined, "I fear your mouth; turn around and let me take your tail." The snake complied with the request and holding fast to the tail the saint was pulled up the steep cliff in perfect safety. Having accomplished its divine commission the snake offered to depart if the saint so desired but Aragawi begged that it remain, with this proviso, that the followers who might visit him from time to time should not be devoured or frightened.

Takla Haymanot

Takla Haymanot, who lived during the thirteenth century, is the greatest native Abyssinian saint. His future glory and renown were announced by a brilliant light or halo which rested over the home of his parents for several days preceding his birth. The initial omen was given confirmation a few days later at his baptism when the officiating priest was so wrapped in wonder and dazzled by the child's beauty that he let the saint fall and had not an invisible hand immediately caught the babe holding him suspended in the air he might have been killed.



The Rock-Church at Debra-Damo.
Note the imitation of wood-work in stone.

In course of time Takla Haymanot became a monk and not only assiduously observed the regular monastic mortification of the flesh but also imposed additional austerities upon himself. Having visited the Holy Sepulchre, and having experienced many marvellous adventures among the Moslems, much to the discomfiture of the latter, he was ordained priest in Egypt by the Coptic Patriarch. The saint's first act after ordination was to repair to the Galla country where his mother was held prisoner and in the course of this adventure not only was his mother liberated but also the heathen were converted by the hundred of thousands. On another occasion Takla Haymanot visited the monastery of Debra Damo in Tigre but so enthusiastic was his reception by the people of the district that the monks of the institution, no doubt prompted by jealousy, failed to appreciate the saint's presence. As stated elsewhere, the monastery of Debra Damo is practically inaccessible, and in order to reach it one must be drawn up the side of the cliff by a rope. While Takla Haymanot was suspended in mid air the Evil One cut the rope and the saint would have been dashed down into the ravine below had not six wings immediately unfurled themselves from under his garments and borne him aloft to the summit. The paintings in the Abyssinian churches, and especially in those churches dedicated to Takla Haymanot, usually represent the saint as possessing wings. Regardless of this hostility and despicable trick of the Evil One we are informed that upon one occasion the devil was actually converted by Takla Haymanot for a period of forty days but we are not told how it happened that later he became a backslider. The miracles and ascetic practices of Takla Haymanot increased with advancing years. One of his last exploits is connected with a small lake in Shoa

where for seven years the saint remained in the crocodile infested water until one of his legs dropped off from putrefaction. For a time there was considerable strife and contention as to who was to possess the sacred relic until the monarch restored peace by claiming it for his capital. At present the relic rests with the other remains of Takla Haymanot in the monastery of Debra Libanos where the faithful drink the healing water in which the saint's leg is annually washed.

Gaber Manfas Kedus

Like Takla Haymanot, Gaber Manfas Kedus, i. e. Slave of the Holy Ghost, was a saint from his natal day. Immediately after birth he stood up, bowed three times, and in a distinct voice said, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost". So great was the saint's holiness that as a baby he neither tasted his mother's milk nor did he ever partake of food and drink of any sort during his life. On one occasion while praying he accidentally fell over a precipice into a chasm several hundred cubits deep but two angels immediately came and spreading out their wings caught him. The saint however spurned their assistance saying that he put his trust in God. It is also related that once when he was ascending a very steep and high mountain the Holy Trinity appeared and assisted him. The greatest miracle of all is concerned with his death or rather with his translation for such a saint could not die. After reaching an extraordinary old age, the Almighty sent Azrael, the messenger of death, to summon the saint; but Gaber refused to die saying that he was not mortal since he had during his life neither eaten nor drunk. Eventually most of the saints visited him and tried to persuade him

A view of Debra-Damo.

The white cross shows where the cliff is ascended by a rope.
The church and its grove are above.

to leave earth for heaven, but still the saint refused. When John the Baptist attempted to reason with Gaber asserting that even he notwithstanding his many privations and sufferings was forced to die he was met with the rejoinder, "Yes, but you could not fast even for forty days, but fed on locusts and wild honey". Similar answers were given to all the saints who visited him, even to the Virgin Mary and our Lord himself who were sent as a last resort. Finally the Almighty was forced to compromise and Gaber was translated to heaven. His tomb however is still pointed out at Zoripwahla in Shoa though everyone is fully aware that it merely contains a rib of the saint which he left behind him as a relic for his followers.

Tederos

Tederos or Theodoros (St. Theodore) lived in a village, which now bears his name, near Rohabaita. Here, a hole in a rock just large enough for a man to squat in is pointed out as the former dwelling place of the saint. The marks worn into the rock by his head, feet and elbows during the many years of his stationary existence are still displayed to the credulous. Many miracles are recorded to Theodoros but two of them are of special interest in manifesting his powers. Upon one occasion a leopard ate up the saint's son. Theodorus, upon returning home and missing the lad, went out into the forest to look for him. When he called his son the leopard appeared and the saint suspecting the truth demanded the beast to restore the boy. Though undoubtedly half digested by that time the boy was immediately restored to his father none the worse for the experience. Once, on being asked where a church should be built, the saint

threw his staff into the air stating that the church was to be built where the staff was found. A few days later the staff was discovered upon the other side of the valley several miles distant, a spot where the church of Debra Maryam now stands.

The Prophecy of Theodore

The "Fekkare Iyasus", a native composition probably of the fourteenth century, is a kind of apocalyptic work which presages the advent of a king Theodore; a Messianic figure who would some day arise in the East, conquer the world, and then usher in a long period of peace and prosperity preceding the final catastrophe that would engulf everything. While the "Fekkare Iyasus" seems to be an original Ethiopic work the theme was an ancient one in the East. An analogous prophecy is recorded in Roman History concerning a successor of the Emperor Valens whose name was to begin with the Greek name *Theos* (GOD). A number of pretenders —Theodosius, Theodotos, Theodulos, i. e. "the gift of God" or "the servant of God"—aspired to the throne but were executed. Whether Kassa, King Theodore (1855-1868), gave the name of Theodore to himself or Abba Salama bestowed it upon him at the coronation matters little, but there can be no doubt that the title was assumed with an eye on the ancient prophecy. Even after Theodore's suicide, during the seige of Magdala by the British, the ancient prophecy lived on in the sudden appearance of a strange personage, with long hair and an immense yellow beard, whom the credulous immediately accepted as the apocalyptic Theodore and began to honor with presents and pilgrimages. Though this event took place only in the last century much mystery

surrounds this foreign adventurer, for that he was such seems certain. He spoke a number of native Abyssinian languages as well as the principal European languages and is generally said to have been a Russian. No doubt the details of the adventure were known to the Abyssinian government but were not made public for political reasons. Eventually matters became so serious that Menelik was forced to take action and the mysterious stranger was quietly removed from the country.

CHAPTER XX

DEMONOLOGY

Throughout the preceding pages a number of superstitions have been mentioned. We shall now treat of a subject that has interested everyone who has travelled in Abyssinia, a subject which is of importance not only because of its intimate connection with the popular religion of the country but also because of the valuable contribution it makes to the psychology of religion.

The term "Bouda" is applied to a peculiar mental disorder which is described by the natives as "being possessed by the devil". This disease chiefly, though not exclusively, attacks women; and usually occurs about the beginning of the rainy season.

Parkyns says:[1] "The first case which I ever saw, and which I consequently watched very attentively and noted down, was that of a servant-woman at Rohabaita. The first day she complained of general languor, and of a stupid heavy feeling about the head. Towards evening this seemed to increase, when she cried a little but was perfectly reasonable, and excused herself by saying that it was only because she felt low and melancholy. An hour after this, however, she burst out into hysterical laughter, and complained of violent pain in the stomach and bowels. It was at this stage, that the other servants began to suspect that she was under the influence of the bouda."

[1] *Life in Abyssinia.* Vol. II., p. 123.

"In a short time she became quiet, and by degrees sank into a state of lethargy, approaching to insensibility . . . . We pinched her repeatedly; but pinch as hard as we could, she never moved a muscle of her face, nor did she otherwise express the least sensation. I held a bottle of strong sal-volatile under her nose, and stopped her mouth, and this having no effect, I steeped some rag in it and placed it in her nostrils; . . . . it had no more effect on her than rosewater. She held her thumbs tightly bent inside her hands, as if to prevent their being seen. On my observing this to a bystander, he told me that the thumbs were the bouda's particular perquisite, and that he would allow no person to take them. Consequently several persons tried to open her hand and get at them; but she resisted with what appeared to me wonderful strength for a girl, and bit their fingers till in more than one instance she drew blood. I made the attempt, and though I got a bite or two. . . . yet. . . . It struck me as more like kissing than anything else, compared with the fearful wounds she had inflicted on the rest of the party. . . . I deluged her with bucketfuls of water, but could not even elicit from her a start or a pant."

"At night she could not sleep, but became restless, and spoke several times. She once remarked in her natural tone of voice, that she was not ill, not attacked by the bouda, but merely wished to return to Adoua. She said this so naturally that I was completely taken off my guard, and told her that of course she might go, but that she must wait till the morrow. The other people smiled, and whispered me that it was only a device of the bouda's to get her into the forest, and there devour her."

"At night determined to see the issue of the affair, I watched her narrowly, and when the guard dropped off

to sleep, one by one, I pretended to do so likewise. She also was perfectly still for near an hour, and I fancied that she too had fallen asleep, when suddenly, the hyena calling close by, she, to my astonishment, rose without her bonds, which I had seen, as I imagined, securely fastened. She then crept on all fours towards the door, which she succeeded in partly opening. I was just going to spring on her when one of the heavily sleeping guards made a noise, which sounded something like a grunt or a snore, and it appeared to me that she stifled a laugh. This led me to believe more and more that she was shamming; but I said nothing, and she returned of her own accord to her place. . . ."

"Next day she appeared a little better, and talked more rationally, but still very wildly, and would neither eat nor drink."

"The second night was passed much as the former one; but the following day we prevailed on her to take a little bread. On swallowing a piece about the size of a nut she became very sick, and a draught of water produced a similar result. A better night seemed to do her good, for on the following day she managed to eat a little, and by slow degrees recovered her health. . . ."

On one occasion Parkyns[2] suspected shamming and having compounded a charm ". . . . proceeding to the place where the sufferer lay, I ordered a large-mouthed jar to be filled with dry mules' dung and lighted. When this had been done, and the smoke began to rise in clouds, I put into it a small quantity of my charm, with every appearance of caution and care, which done we seized the unfortunate victim, and with some difficulty forced her head close to the jar's mouth, and then rolled a

[2] Op cit. Vol. II p. 131.

quarry (shamma) round it and the jar, so as at once to keep her fast, and prevent the escape of the smallest quantity of smoke. As may be imagined, in a moment she began to cough violently, and at last, being almost suffocated, cried out, 'Let me off, for pity's sake; I am not ill, but only shamming.' I solemnly asserted this to be only a device of the Evil One to get away from the charm, and held on, till her cries for pity, for the sake of the Virgin, of Oubi, etc., becoming more confused, and her cough more violent, I feared lest she might suffer too much if kept longer."

"I had forgotten to mention that one of the principal symptoms is a great longing for charcoal, of which the patient will eat any quantity she can obtain. The first proof of the devil's leaving her is her allowing her thumbs to be taken hold of."

Stern[3] relates as follows: "During the rainy season, when the weather, like the mind, is cheerless and dull, the boudas, as if in mockery of the universal gloom celebrate their saturnalia. In our small settlement, the monotony of our existence was constantly diversified by a bouda scene. Towards the close of August, when every shrub and tree began to sprout and blossom, the disease degenerated into a regular epidemic; and in the course of an evening two, three, and not unfrequently every hut occupied by natives would ring with that familiar household cry. A heavy thunderstorm, by some mysterious process, seemed invariably to predispose the people to the bouda's torturing influence."

"I remember one day, about the end of August, we had a most terrific tempest. . . . The noise and tumult of the striving elements had scarcely subsided, when a

[3] *Wanderings among the Falashas*, p. 154.

servant of Mr. Mayer, a stout, robust, and masculine woman, began to exhibit the bouda symptoms. She had been complaining the whole noon of languor, faintness, and utter incapacity for all physical exertion. About sunset her lethargy increased, and she gradually sank into a state of apparent unconsciousness. . . . To outwit the conjurors, I thought it advisable to try the effect of a strong liquid ammonia on the nerves of the Evil One. . . . I instantly applied my bottle to her nose; but although the potent smell made all near raise a cry of terror, it produced no more effect on the passive and insensible patient than if it had been water from the newly formed rivulets."

"An amateur exorcist. . . . no sooner hobbled into the hut than the possessed woman, as if struck by a magnetic wire, burst into loud fits of laughter and the paroxysms of a raving maniac. Half a dozen stalwart fellows caught hold of her, but frenzy imparted a vigour to her frame which even the united strength of these athletes was barely sufficient to keep under control. She tried to bite, kick, and tear everyone within reach; and when she found herself foiled in all those mischievous attempts, she convulsively grasped the unpaved wet floor, and, in imitation of the hyena, gave utterance to the most discordant sounds. Manacled and shackled with leather thongs, she was now partly dragged and partly carried to an open grassy spot; . . . . the conjuror . . . . began his exorcising art."

"The poor sufferer, as if conscious of the dreaded old man's presence, struggled frantically to escape his skill; but the latter, disregarding her entreaties and lamentations, her fits of unnatural gaiety and bursts of thrilling anguish, with one hand laid an amulet on her heaving bosom, whilst with the other, he made her smell a rag,

in which the root of a strong scented plant, a bone of a hyena, and some other abominable unguents were bound up. The mad rage of the possessed woman being instantaneously hushed by this operation, the conjuror addressed himself to the bouda's evil spirit, and, in language not fit for polite ears, requested him to give his name.' The demon is always masculine, whatever may be the sex of the person possessed. Question and answer followed, and finally the 'conjuror' formally exorcised the demon. " 'I command thee in the name of the Blessed Trinity, the twelve apostles, and the three hundred and eighteen bishops at the council of Nicaea, to leave this woman, and never more to molest her.' "

"The bouda did not feel disposed to obey the conjuror; but on being threatened with a repast of glowing coals. . . . he demanded something to eat; and to my utter disgust, his taste was as coarse as the torments inflicted on the young woman were ungallant. Filth and dirt of the most revolting description, together with an admixture of water, were the choice delicacies he selected for his supper. . . . several persons hastened to prepare, ... the earthen dish had been hidden in the center of a leafy shrub, the conjuror said to the bouda, 'As thy father did, so do thou.' These words had scarcely escaped the lips of the exorcist, when the possessed person leaped up, and, crawling on all fours, sought the dainty repast which she lapped with a sickening avidity and greediness. She now laid hold of a stone, which three strong men could scarcely lift, and raising it aloft in the air, whirled it madly around her head for two seconds, and then fell senseless on the ground. In half an hour she recovered, but was quite unconscious of what had transpired."

"Three other women had similar attacks that same

evening, and that, too, without any premonitory symptoms. I tried to deceive one, and instead of the disgusting concoction, put a wooden dish with bread and water in her way; but on smelling it she shrank from its contents, and rapidly crep on till the strong effluvia brought her to the spot where the loathsome viands were concealed."

Dufton [4] mentions a case of Bouda: " . . . . I had the satisfaction of seeing at Gaffat a case of bouda. This term is given to a phenomenon of a mental abstraction which the natives explain as 'being possessed by the devil.' The case I am about to mention happened to a female in the service of one of the Europeans. Her symptoms began in a kind of fainting fit, in which the fingers were clenched in the palms of the hands, the eyes glazed, and nostrils distended, and the whole body stiff and inflexible. Afterwards she commenced a hideous laugh in imitation of the hyena, and began running about on all fours; she was then seized by the bystanders, and a bouda doctor having been called in, this individual began questioning her as to the persons who had possessed her with this hyena devil. She said he was a man living in Gooderoo, south of Abyssinia, and also told how long the spirit would be in possession, and what was required to expel him. Great care must be taken of persons thus afflicted, as cases of this kind sometimes end in death. All their demands for dress, food, trifles of any sort, must be strictly attended to. In the height of the frenzy they will sometimes carry out the idea of their hyena identity to such an extent as to attack any animal that may happen to be in the way. . . ."

Stern [5] explains a case of zar: "Next in importance to

[4] *A Journey Through Abyssinia,* London 1867, p. 167.
[5] *"Wanderings Among the Falashas"*, p. 154.

the bouda is the zar. This malady is exclusively confined to unmarried women, and has this peculiar feature, that during the violence of the paroxysm it prompts the patient to imitate the sharp discordant growl of the leopard. I recollect that the first time I saw a case of this description, it gave me a shock which made my blood run cold. The sufferer was a handsome, gay, and lively girl, a little above fifteen. In the morning she was engaged as usual in her work, when a quarrel ensued between her and other domestics. The fierce dispute, though of a trifling character, roused the passions of the fiery Ethiopian to such a pitch that it brought on an hysterical affection. The natives all cried 'She is possessed,' and certainly her ghastly smile, nervous tremor, wild stare, and unnatural howl, justified the notion. To expel the zar, a conjuror, as in the bouda complaint, was formerly considered indispensable; but by dint of perseverance the medical faculty of the country, to their infinite satisfaction, have at length made the happy discovery that a sound application of the whip is quite as potent an antidote against this evil as the necromancer's spell."

Referring to a malady similar to bouda, Parkyns[6] says: ". . . . The Tigritiya is his near relation (of the bouda), but generally a far more disagreeable and dangerous devil than he. His dependents are supposed to be found in great numbers in Godjam which province, indeed, is celebrated for sorcerers of all kinds. The first symptoms usually are the gradual wasting away of the attacked persons, without any cause being apparent either to herself or her relatives. At last, however, after dieting, and the ordinary medicines have been unsuccess-

[6] "Life in Abyssinia", Vol. II., p. 136.

fully tried, it becomes a matter of suspicion to her friends, who determine on ascertaining whether or not she be afflicted with this evil. The first thing to be observed is to feed her daintly and dress her neatly. As her complaint and this treatment advance, she becomes peevish and fretful, and is always longing for something or other. Whatever she demands must be procured. . . ."

"With some persons it is necessary to have recourse to music before the real cause of their complaint can be discovered. Drums and other musical instruments are collected outside the chamber door, and the musicians suddenly strike up all together, when the patient is not expecting it. If her illness be of an ordinary kind, she will, of course, beg of them to desist, but if possessed, she will leap or fall from her couch to the ground, and commence shrugging her shoulders and swinging her head to and fro in time with the music; beginning with a slight movement, but gradually increasing in pace as she appears to become excited; till at last her motions are so violent that a spectator is led to fear for the safety of her neck. It is truly wonderful to see a sick person whom you have just beheld stretched on a bed, a weak, emaciated bag of bones, apparently without strength to rise, keeping up this very fatiguing motion with a velocity and power of endurance that would be astonishing even in an ordinarily strong person. On the music's ceasing she rests, and then begins to speak, telling his name (that is, the devil's). . . . and it is usually after this that she demands the trinkets. . . . making their production the condition of her dancing again. She. . . . generally contrives to name objects that are most difficult to obtain. . . ."

"The mode of ejecting the Old Gentleman . . . After the patient has been induced to dance pretty frequently

it is to be hoped that the devil is put into a tolerably good humor, ... the friends of the sufferer inquire of her when he will be disposed to quit his present residence and go to his own palace. The first time this question is ventured upon, the spirit generally replies that he is not yet satisfied with the entertainment he has received at their hands, and seizes the opportunity of demanding something more. After a time, however, if things go on well, he fixes a day for taking his leave, usually the seventh after the day on which he makes his announcement. The happy time having arrived, a large party is assembled in some wild spot in the country, and there must be feasting, dancing, and music. . . . The patient joins in with the rest; and the devil, when satisfied, announces his intention to depart. This he signifies through the medium of his victim, who takes off her finery; then, bowing her head, she kisses her hands in token of a farewell, and starts off, running at a pace which few men could equal. She cannot, however, keep it up for more than from fifty to a hundred yards, when she falls to the ground senseless. At this moment the spirit is supposed to have left her; and lest he should find himself worse off outside than in, and, changing his mind, return to her, five or six active young men are prepared beforehand, and as soon as she starts they follow her, and, coming up to her just as she is falling, place themselves in threatening attitudes around her body, one holding a drawn sword, another firing a charge of powder out of a matchlock, and a third brandishing a lance. This is supposed to intimidate the fiend, and prevent his return, should he be so disposed."

"The woman, who but a moment before was out-doing all the party, both in the dance and in running, now lies stretched on the ground helpless and emaciated, as if after a long illness. She faintly calls for water, which is

given her; and when a little restored, she is asked her name; which she answers correctly; and as a conclusive proof of her freedom from the power of the Evil One, she is requested to repeat the formerly so much dreaded words — Bism Ab, ou Weld, ou Menfus Kouddos (in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost). A sheep or a fowl is killed, broiled on the embers, and eaten with bread. The patient's friends partake of this food when the devil goes out of her. The bones and remains of the meat are burned with fire, and the fragments of the bread buried in the ground. These are so left for the devil, that if he should come back to the place he may remain and feed, and not go on and bother the woman. This is the cure complete, though it often takes a considerable time to effect it."

Concerning the Bouda, Parkyn [7] concludes: "To many of my readers it will doubtless appear, and very naturally, that all these symptoms are impostures resorted to by the pretended sufferers as a means of procuring the borrowed finery, and enjoying the gaieties and festivities which are considered as the means of curing the disorder. This sounds very probable; and I cannot deny that such is my own opinion, though there are still some points which have rather puzzled me. First, as in the bouda, the extraordinary talent for acting which they display, and then the fact that the imposture has not been discovered and published centuries ago, but that is it still believed by the very people among whom it has so long been and still daily continues to be practised. How is it possible that a woman, who in her youthful days may have been guilty of such a hoax, should suffer herself to be imposed upon and led into so much trouble and expense by her children

[7] *Life in Abyssinia,* Vol. II, p. 141.

afterwards? And yet this is of common occurrence. From this last remark let it not be supposed that young women are the only sufferers; men and women of all ages are liable, though the young of the fair sex are perhaps the most frequently possessed. One of my servants, who, by the great anxiety he showed in watching and tending the patients, was evidently convinced of the truth of their sufferings, had himself been attacked many years before, and assured me that after his recovery he had not the slightest recollection of anything that had taken place while the fit was on him, but that his friends had told him all about it. How was it possible that this man, supposing his own illness to have been feigned, could be cheated by the same means? Lastly, the most puzzling thing of all is when a person acts sickness to such perfection that Azrael himself is deceived, and, mistaking the feigned malady for a real one, finishes it by seriously taking away the life of the shammer."

Stern [8] concludes concerning the Bouda: . . . . "That there is something in these diseases and in their mode of cure which transcends ordinary disorders no one who has stood beside a frantic and agonized patient and wondered at the sudden and more than dramatic transition from raving frenzy to childlike docility can well deny; but without deciding whether it is epilepsy, catalepsy, or hysteria, I am quite sure that fiends and spirits have less to do with the matter than the irregular life and dissolute course which so many pursue."

Mr. Wylde [9] remarks: . . . "The bouda, or evil spirit, that attacks some of the young women, nearly always ugly virgins of hysterical and plain-looking girls that men

[8] *Wanderings Among the Falashas,* p. 161.

[9] *Modern Abyssinia,* London 1901, p. 385.

will never notice, is to my mind the greatest fraud of all their superstitions. Everyone has written about it, and I am afraid that they have drawn a good deal on their imagination, and the missionaries who have visited the country have perhaps, been quite as bigoted as the people they have tried to describe. I believe that these peculiar fits which the women have, when they do all sorts of filthy things, are nothing more than hysteria; many women even in civilized countries are not responsible for their actions when suffering from these complaints, and people who are inclined to believe in the miraculous take for granted what the ignorant peasantry say. I have seen several young women suffering from the 'bouda' and a bucket of cold water that I have thrown over them, and a good smacking from my servant, has soon sent the devil away, and the only after effect has been that they are sulky, because they were not made much of."

While we need not accept Wylde's simple solution of the problem of Bouda we can agree with him in affirming that its symptoms are not confined to Abyssinia. Modern psychology has shed considerable light upon the subject. No doubt many cases of Bouda are shammed, as Parkyns discovered, but many of them are genuine. It seems quite possible that Bouda is a term covering a number of psychopathic conditions rather than one. Parkyns' bewilderment because patients died of Bouda need not mystify us. If death was not actually caused from some organic disarrangement it probably came from fear.

CONCLUSION

Something of the mysterious atmosphere which once enveloped Prester John still hovers over the Abyssinian Church and many travellers and authors have either lost themselves in that ancient mist or have attempted to itensify rather than to dissipate it. Even Archdeacon Dowling who had unrivalled opportunities for investigating the services of the Abyssinian Church in Jerusalem fails to give us any first hand information and concludes his brief and vague description of the service on the festival of the Blessed Virgin as held in the Church of Paradise, Jerusalem, with the words "quite beyond my powers." Consequently little is known of Abyssinian Christianity and even much of this knowledge is of a precarious nature. A few exotic practices such as the Feast of the Epiphany and the dances of the priests have been seized with avidity and described either with awe verging on a wounded moral sense of decency or with disdain, but the similarities and the organic relationship which exist between the Abyssinian and other Eastern Churches have been largely ignored.

Whatever faults we may impute to the Portuguese Jesuists at least they came to grips with reality and recognized that the Abyssinian Church was a living part of Christianity. It is a sad commentary upon those who followed them that we are still compelled to consult their works upon many questions, especially as summed up in Ludolf. Just before and during the Victorian Era, travellers and missionaries, with few exceptions, had

neither the Jesuits' knowledge nor insight, and their tendency to moralize and to compare the worst in Abyssinia with the best at home colored most of their observations. No doubt Abyssinian morals, of which we hear so much, then as now, could be improved; but it is a question whether they were much worse than those of the co-religionists of their critics. Fortunately today, or theoretically at least, we have learned to judge the morals of a people by their opportunities rather than by an abstract code of ethics which has no actual existence, and we are no longer adverse to admitting that every religion has its ideals as well as its saints.

The Abyssinian Church is not a hybrid form of Christianity, as has often been assumed, but an integral part of the Eastern Church and hence if we may say so requires neither theological nor liturgical evangelization.

The monophysitism of the Abyssinian Church has not only been overstressed but also the causes for its existence and continuance have been minimized. If the present Liturgy of their Church can be used as a criterion the Abyssinians believe in the two natures of Christ but do not know how to express that belief in terms of Greek metaphysics. The Chalcedonian formula was rejected because it was thought to destroy the one person of Christ. It is hardly to be expected that the Abyssinians of the fifth century could distinguish between "nature" and "person". Again, most of Abyssinia's early contact with Christianity was through persons who held monophysite tendencies. Continued isolation of the Abyssinian Church from the rest of Christendom after the rise of Islam and the conservative nature of highlanders perpetuated the error and the Portuguese attempt to force the Chalcedonian decree upon them only brought

a reaction. Rightly Abyssinian theologians saw what their political leaders could not foresee that the Chalcedonian decree was a part of the Portuguese program of subjugation and if accepted would have meant the loss of their Church's independence and ultimately the loss of national independence; for there is little doubt that the Church has been the cause of Abyssinia's independence and that monophysitism has been a large factor in the preservation of the independence of the Church. Since the Portuguese period at least monophysitism in the Abyssinian Church such as it is, seems to have had as its foundation political causes rather than theological, and it is scarcely to be doubted when the political causes have been removed and when a higher standard of education prevails monophysitism may no longer be an issue.

The Jewish remnants in the Abyssinian Church have also been overstressed. Much has been said about circumcision but little about clitoridectomy, which is certainly African. Circumcision could either be a native African custom, it was practised in Egypt and is still observed among many African tribes as well as in other parts of the world, or it could have been derived from the Semitic invaders. The same is true of clean and unclean observances. Both circumcision and food observances were taboos in origin and not the exclusive prerogatives of the Jews; in fact the Jews borrowed circumcision. As for the observance of the Sabbath, the Abyssinians are at least logical in that they have not confused it with Sunday as many Protestants have done. If the Sabbath in Abyssinia is a day of rest and has inconvenienced a number of travellers it would be well to remember that nothing is quite so deadly or gloomy as the Sabbath-Sunday of England and some parts of the United States. What Jewish customs exist in Abyssinian

Christianity have come through early Christianity and that such is the case we may agree with Claudius in his confession. But to assume that the Abyssinian Church is not quite Christian, because of a few Jewish similarities, condemns the rest of Christendom at the same time.

Some one has suggested that several liturgical scholars should be sent to Abyssinia as advisors to the native Church. We fail to see the reason. A liturgy is a natural growth and not the product of a liturgiologist. Too often the liturgiologist is merely a learned and pedantic craftsman and not an artist, and should he be an artist, party politics would hinder his expression. The present Abyssinian Liturgy is a beautiful piece of work and scarcely needs revision; if it does, it were best done by natives. Of course the dances of the priests are somewhat unseemly. That is one of the weaknesses of the Abyssinian Church, it has not yet driven the arts out of doors as the churches in Europe have done.

When all is said however, Abyssinian Christianity is primitive and still contains crudities which time alone will render obsolete, but when the history of the Abyssinian Church is reviewed as a whole and judged by its accomplishments rather than by its defeats, and the preservation of national independence and the maintenance of a moral standard superior to anything around them is no mean accomplishment, we are compelled to admire rather than to condemn. When reforms do come, and they are arriving, it is to be hoped that the policy of Menelik and the present Regent will continue, that is, that they will come gradually and only as they can be assimilated by the people. And when all reforms have arrived it is to be hoped that the negarits will still be patted softly—while the priests dance.

APPENDIX I

Chronological List of Abyssinian Emperors[1]

Lalibala (zague dynasty)	about 1200
Na akueto La Ab (zague dynasty)	about 1230
Yekuno Amlak, Tasfa Iyasu	1269-1284
Salomon, Agbea Seyon	1284-1293
Bahr Asgad and Senf Agad	1293-1296
Hezba Ared and Qedma Asgad and Diyan Asgad	1296-1298
Wedem Raad	1298-1313
Amda Seyon, Gabra Masqal	1313-1343
Newaya Krestos, Saifa Arad	1343-1371
Newaya Maryam, Wedem Asfare	1371-1381
Dawit I	1381-1410
Tewodros I	1410-1413
Yeshaq, Gabra Masqal	1413-1428
Endreyas	1428-1429
Takla Maryam	1429-1432
Sarwe Iyasu	1432-1433
Amda Iyasu	1433
Zara Yaqob, Quastantinos I	1433-1467
Baeda Maryam	1467-1478
Eskender, Quastantinos II	1478-1494
Amda Seyon II	1494-1494
Naod	1494-1508
Lebna Dengel, Dawit II, Wanag Sagad I	1508-1540
Galawdewos, Asnaf Sagad I (Claudius)	1540-1559
Minas, Wanag Sagad II, Admas Sagad I	1559-1563
Sarsa Dengel, Malak Sagad I	1563-1597
Yaqob, Malak Sagad II (1st time)	1597-1603
Za Dengel, Asnaf Sagad II	1603-1604

[1] Chaine, *La Chronologie des Temps Chretiens de l'Egypte et de l'Ethiopie,* Paris 1925, pp. 246-248.

Yaqob, Malak Sagad II (2nd time)	1607
Susneyos, Malak Sagad III, Seltan Sagad I	1607-1632
Fasiladas, Seltan Sagad II, Alam Sagad	1632-1667
Yohannes I, Alaf Sagad	1667-1682
Iyasu I, Adyam Sagad I	1682-1706
Takla Haymanot I, Abrak Sagad, Leul Sagad, Gerum Sagad	1706-1708
Tewoflos, Asrar Sagad	1708-1711
Yostos, Zahay Sagad	1711-1716
Dawit III, Adbar Sagad I	1716-1721
Bakafa, Asma Giyorgis, Adbar Sagad, Masih Sagad.	1721-1730
Iyasu II, Berhan Sagad, Adyam Sagad II	1730-1755
Iyoas I, Adyam Sagad III	1755-1769
Yohannes II	1769-1769
Takla Haymanot II, Admas Sagad II, Hail Sagad, Tebab Sagad	1769-1777
Salomon II	1777-1779
Takla Giyorgis, Feqr Sagad (1st time)	1779-1784
Iyasu III, Baala Segab	1784-1788
Baeda Maryam (in battle with Iyasu III)	
Takla Giyorgis, Feqr Sagad (2nd time)	1789
Hezekeyas	1794
Takla Giyorgis, Feqr Sagad (3rd time)	1795
Baeda Maryam II	1795
Takla Giyorgis, Feqr Sagad (4th time)	1795-1796
Salomon III (1st time)	1796-1797
Yonas	1797-1798
Takla Giyorgis, Feqr Sagad (5th time)	1798-1799
Salomon III (2nd time)	1799
Demetros (1st time)	1799-1800
Takla Giyorgis, Feqr Sagad (6th time)	1800
Demetros (2nd time)	1800-1801
Egwala Seyon, Gwalu, Neway Sagad	1801-1818
Iyoas II	1818-1821
Gigar (1st time)	1821-1826
Baeda Maryam III	1826
Gigar (2nd time)	1830
Iyasu IV	1830-1832
Gabra Krestos	1832

Sahela Dengel (1st time)	1840
Yohannes III	1841
Sahela Dengel (2nd time)	1841-1855
Tewodros II[2]	1855-1868
Yohannes IV	1872-1889
Menelik II	1889-1914
Likj Yeasus	1914-1916
Zauditu[3]	1916-

[2] Chaine's chronology ends here. Several years of anarchy followed the death of Theodore.

[3] Daughter of Menelik. The Regent and Heir apparent is H. I. H. Ras Tafari, a grand nephew of Menelik.

APPENDIX II

CHRONOLOGICAL LISTS OF THE ABUNAS

I [1]

I Fre Menatas (Frumentius) called Salama.
II Minas.
III Abreham.
IV Yohannes.
V-XLI 37 unknown, buried at Aksum.
XLII Bartalomewos, buried at Hagaray.
XLIII-XLIV unknown, buried at Navrait.
XLV Sawiros.
XLVI Mikael I.
XLVII Mikael II.
XLVIII Yaqob.
XLIX Yohannes.
L Maqares.
LI Yaqob II.
LII Gabra Krestos, buried at Beguena.
LIII-LV unknown.
LVI Salama, interpreter of the Scriptures.
LVII Bartalomewos, under Sayfa Arad.
LVIII Fiqtor, buried at Zaro.
LIX Yohannes, buried at Qeso.
LX Mikael, buried at Embarabe.
LXI Marqos, buried at Debra Estifanos.
LXII Mikael.
LXIII Gabrel.
LXIV Yohannes.
LXV Mikael.
LXVI Yeshaq.
LXVII Marqos.

[1] Zotemberg, *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens de la Bibliothèque Nationale,* Paris 1877, p. 263. Also Guidi, *Bessarione,* 1889.

II [2]

I Salama.
II Minas.
III Petros I.
IV Matewos I.
V Marqos I.
VI Yohannes I.
VII Gabrel I.
VIII Yohannes II.
IX Gabrel II.
X Minas.
XI Mikael.
XII Yeshaq.
XIII Semon I.
XIV Petros II.
XV Mikael I.
XVI Gabrel III.
XVII Yohannes III.
XVIII Matewos II.
XIX Mikael II.
XX Semon II.
XXI Yohannes IV.
XXII Marqos II.
XXIII Abreham I.
XXIV Gerilos.
XXV Yohannes V.
XXVI Mikael III.
XXVII Semon III.
XXVIII Petros III.
XXIX Matewos III.
XXX Yaqob.
XXXI Fiqtor.
XXXII Qerilos.
XXXIII Qozmos I.
XXXIV Yostos I.
XXXV Mikael IV.
XXXVI Gabrel IV.
XXXVII Mikael V.
XXXVIII Matewos III.
XXXIX Yosab.
XL Yosef.
XLI Qozmos II.
XLII Filatewos.
XLIII Petros IV.
XLIV Yohannes III.
XLV Fiqtor II.
XLVI Yostos II.
XLVII Barmeya.
XLVIII Mikael VI.
XLIX Gabrel V.
L Minas II.
LI Yohannes VII.
LII Yohannes VIII.
LIII Abreham II.
LIV Marqos III.
LV Maqares.
LVI Mikael VII.
LVII Matewos IV.
LVIII Mikael VIII.
LIX Gabrel III
LX Yohannes IX.
LVI
LXII Qerilos II.
LXIII Minas III.
LXIV Matewos V.
LXV Mikael IX.
LXVI Gabrel VII.
LXVII Marqos V.
LXVIII Gabrel VIII.
LXIX Matewos VI.
LXX Yohannes X.

[2] Wright, *Catalogue of the ethiopic manuscripts in the British Museum*, London 1871, p. 320. Also Guidi, *Bessarione*, 1889.

LXXI Minas IV.
LXXII Marqos VI.
LXXIII Krestodolo.
LXXIV Zakaryas.
LXXV Filatewos II.
LXXVI Senyos.
LXXVII Gabrel IX.
LXXVIII Yohannes XI.
LXXIX Mikael X.
LXXX Gabrel X.
LXXXI Bartalomewos.
LXXXII Matewos VII.
LXXXIII Yohannes XII.
LXXXIV Marqos VII.
LXXXV Yeshaq II.
LXXXVI Kaladyanu.
LXXXVII Petros V.
LXXXVIII Matewos VIII.
LXXXIX Semon IV.
XC Yosab II.
XCI Mikael XI.
XCII Matewos IX.
XCIII Marqos VIII.
XCIV Petros VI.
XCV Semon V.
XCVI Marqos IX.
XCVII Mikael XII.
XCVIII Yohannes XIII.
XCIX Krestodolo II.
C Sinoda.
CI Marqos X.
CII Krestodolo III.
CIII Yohannes XIV.
CIV Yosab III.
CV Makaryos.
CVI Qerilos.
CVII Salama.
VCIII Athanasios.

III [1]

List of some of the Metropolitans of whom we can fix the dates by the means of documents. Many dates are approximate.

I Yohannes	820
II Yaqob (?)	848
III Petros	930
IV Dengel	980
V Qerilos	1050
VI Sawiros	1060
VII Giyorgis	1100
VIII Mikael	1120-1130
IX Mikael	1190
X Yeshaq	1210
XI Giyorgis	1225
XII Takla Haymanot	1280
XIII Yohannes	1310

[1] Chaine, *La Chronologie*—pp. 267-270.

XIV Yaqob	1320
XV Salama	1348-1388
XVI Bartalomewos	1390-1420
XVII Yohannes	1432
XVIII Mikael	1450
XIX Gabrel	1450
XX Yeshaq (?)	1510
XXI Marqos	1530
XXII Yohannes	1540 (?)
XXIII Yosab	1547
XXIV Petros	1551
XXV Marqos	1567
XXVI Krestodolo	1590
XXVII Petros	1607
XXVIII Semon	1617
XXIX (Rezq Allah)	1634
XXX Marqos	1637
XXXI Mikael	1649
XXXII Yohannes	1649
XXXIII Krestodolo	1665-1672
XXXIV Sinoda	1672-1694
XXXV Marqos	1694-1716
XXXVI Krestodolo	1720-1742
XXXVII Yohannes	1750
XXXVIII Yosab	1770
XXXIX Makaryos	1808
XL Qerilos [2]	1820
XLI Salama	1867
XLII Athanasios	1876
XLIII Matewos	

[2] Following the death of Qerilos the Abyssinian Church was without an Abuna for fifteen years.

APPENDIX III

THE CONFESSION OF CLAUDIUS[1]

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God.

This is my faith, and the faith of my fathers, Kings of Israel; and the faith of my flock, which is within the fold, my kingdom.

We believe in one God: And in his only Son Jesus Christ, his Word and his Power, his Counsel and his Wisdom; Who was with Him before the world was created: And in the last days He came unto us, not laying aside the throne of his Godhead; And was made man of the Holy Ghost, and of Mary the Holy Virgin: And He was baptized in the River Jordan, in his thirtieth year; And He was perfect man: And He was crucified on the wood of the cross, in the days of Pontius Pilate; He suffered, died, and was buried: And He rose again on the third day; and then on the fortieth day ascended with glory into heaven, And sat on the right hand of his Father: And He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father: And we believe in one Baptism for the remission of sins: And we look for the resurrection of the dead: And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

And we walk in the King's Highway, evident and true; and neither to the right nor to the left do we turn aside from the Doctrine of our Fathers, the Twelve Apostles; and of Paul, the Font of Wisdom; and of the Seventy-Two Disciples; and of the Three-Hundred and Eighteen Orthodox, who were gathered together in Nicea; and of the One-Hundred and Fifty, in Constantinople; and of the Two-Hundred, in Ephesus.

Thus do I proclaim and thus do I teach, I, Claudius, King of

[1] Ludolf, *Historia Aethiopica,* Frankfort, 1681, Vol. II. pp. 237-241.

Ethiopia, whose reigning name is Asnaf Sagad (I), the son of Wanag Sagad, the son of Naod.

Now with regard to our observance of the original Sabbath (Saturday): We do not keep it as the Jews do who crucified Christ—saying, *"His blood be on us, and on our children"*—because those Jews neither drink water nor light a fire, neither cook food nor make bread, nor do they move about from house to house; but we keep it in that we celebrate thereon the Lord's Supper, and hold Love Feasts, even as our Fathers the Apostles have instructed us in the Didascalia. We do not observe it as the Sabbath of the first day of the week (Sunday), which is a new day—concerning which David saith, *"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it"*—because on it our Lord Jesus Christ rose again, and on it the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles in the upper-room of Zion, and on it He became incarnate in the womb of Saint Mary, ever-Virgin; and on it He will come again to reward the righteous and to recompense sinners.

Again, concerning the question of Circumcision: We are not circumcised as the Jews, because we know the words of the Doctrine of Paul, the Font of Wisdom, who saith,—*"Neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, which is, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ"*.—And again he saith to the Corinthians,—*"He that received circumcision, let him not receive uncircumcision."*—All the books of the Doctrine of Paul are in our hands, and teach us concerning circumcision and uncircumcision. But circumcision amongst us is according to the custom of the country, like the tatooing of the face in Ethiopia and Nubia, and like the piercing of the ear amongst the Indians. And what we do, is not in observance of the Mosaic Law, but according to the custom of men.

Finally, with regard to eating the flesh of swine: We are not prohibited from it, as the Jews are, by observance of the Law of Moses. But him who eats thereof we do not abhor or consider unclean, and him who does not eat thereof we do not compel to eat; as our Father Paul wrote to the Romans, saying,—*"Let not him who eateth despise him who eateth not, for God receiveth all. The Kingdom of God does not consist in food and drink. All is clean to the clean, but it is evil for a man to eat with offense."*—And

Matthew the Evangelist saith,—*"There is nothing that can defile the man except that which cometh forth from his mouth, for that which goeth into the belly and is retained there, this is cast out and poured forth in the draught."*—Thus He maketh all food clean. When He spoke these words He destroyed all the structure of the error of the Jews, who are taught from the Book of the Law.

My faith is also the faith of my faithful priets who teach by my command within my kingdom, and they depart not from the way of the Gospel, nor from the Doctrine of our Father Paul; either to the right or to the left.

And in the book entitled Tarik it stands written, —*"That King Constantine commanded in the days of his kingdom that all baptized Jews should eat of swine's flesh on the day of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ."*—According as it shall seem fit, however, to every man, he may abstain from eating of animal food. There are some who delight in the flesh of fish, and there are some who take delight in the flesh of fowl; and there are some who abstain from eating the flesh of sheep. Thus every man as it seemeth good unto him follows his own inclination. This is the good will and pleasure of men. And touching the eating of animal food there is no law or canon in the New Testament.—*"All is clean to the clean."*—And Paul also saith,—*"Let him that believeth eat all things."*—

This is all that I desired to write, that thou mightest know the truth of my faith. *Written in the* 1555*th year from the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, on the* 23*rd day of Sane, in the province of Damot.*

MAP OF ABYSSINIA

35°
SOUDAN
KASSALA
ERITREA
MASSOWAH
SAGANEITI
ADUA
TIGRE
YEHA
AKSUM
SIMEN
WALDEBBA
DAMBAYA
Blue Nile
AMBAY MARYAM
BEGEMED
KORATA
DEBRA TABOR
BAHARDAR GIYORGIS
ALATA
MAHDARA MARYAM
DAMOT
GOJAM
DEBRA LIBANOS
DEBRA BERNAM
ADDIS ALAM
ENTOTTO
ABYSSINIA
KAFFA
Lake Rudolph
UGANDA
13°
10°
5°
35°

ARABIA
EGYPT
SOUDAN
ABYSSINIA
KENYA
ADEN
AFAR
OR
DANAKIL
DJIBUTI
FRENCH SOMALILAND
GULF OF ADEN
BRITISH
SOMALILAND
HARRAR
SOMALI
LAND
ITALIAN SOMALILAND
KENYA
Railway
W. Shebeli
W. Juba
45°
50
100
150
200
250 Miles

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